

THE
NIEMANS



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



THE NIEMANS,

BY

REV. MILTON H. STINE, PH. D.,

AUTHOR OF

"STUDIES ON THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM OF OUR COUNTRY,"
"A WINTER JAUNT THROUGH HISTORIC LANDS."

YORK, PA.:
P. ANSTADT & SONS,
1897.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1897, by
M. H. STINE, Ph. D.,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PS
3537
S855 n

INTRODUCTION.

The Niemans presents the vicissitudes of which an American family in these closing years of the nineteenth century, with its chances for travel, development, and changes in fortune, is capable.

The story, whilst not a true history, contains narratives of actual occurrences. For instance, the terrible ordeal through which Carrie and her Hero are made to pass is an account of an actual occurrence.

The descriptions of natural sceneries are the result of personal observation by the Author, and give a true idea of the places visited.

The story, whilst not a religious novel, preserves throughout the highest moral tone, and proves conclusively that

“Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of heaven.”

It emphasizes always that wealth is not exempt from disappointment and suffering, and that the moral, though poor, have as much real enjoyment as those who roll in wealth.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	
A shocking accident and a sad disappointment, ...	9
CHAPTER II.	
A history and a mystery, ...	17
CHAPTER III.	
A murder threatened and a precipitate flight, ...	29
CHAPTER IV.	
A camping party and some strange discoveries, ...	37
CHAPTER V.	
A fortune; but how to get it?	47
CHAPTER VI.	
A narrow escape, ...	54
CHAPTER VII.	
Convalescent, ...	66
CHAPTER VIII.	
Sad memories and blessed comforts, ...	72
CHAPTER IX.	
Dissolved partnership, ...	79
CHAPTER X.	
Bravery begets confidence, ...	86
CHAPTER XI.	
She loved well but not wisely, ...	93
CHAPTER XII.	
Burros and Pueblos, ...	102
CHAPTER XIII.	
A divorce and how it was obtained, ...	111
CHAPTER XIV.	
Dr. Burns pops the question, ...	122

CHAPTER XV.	
More about Sharp and Octavia, ...	133
CHAPTER XVI.	
Carrie and "the hero" have an evening together, . . .	143
CHAPTER XVII.	
Sharp, ...	150
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Octavia secures her agent, ...	157
CHAPTER XIX.	
Peter Gray's visit to the encampment and the city of iron vigor, ...	164
CHAPTER XX.	
A cure for leprosy, ...	173
CHAPTER XXI.	
Some of Sharp's plans, ...	183
CHAPTER XXII.	
Very sick, ...	194
CHAPTER XXIII.	
Afflictions, ...	201
CHAPTER XXIV.	
The business, ...	208
CHAPTER XXV.	
The plunder divided, ...	219
CHAPTER XXVI.	
A strange experience, ...	223
CHAPTER XXVII.	
Sharp's bad day, ...	230
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
From jest to earnest, ...	237
CHAPTER XXIX.	
Felix quits the Dives, ...	245
CHAPTER XXX.	
Felix and Sharp in the home of the Dives, ...	254
CHAPTER XXXI.	
Octavia is rich at last, ...	262

	CHAPTER XXXII.	
Octavia is engaged, ...		270
	CHAPTER XXXIII.	
On the wing, ...		279
	CHAPTER XXXIV.	
Lost in the mountains, ...		287
	CHAPTER XXXV.	
Sundries, ...		296
	CHAPTER XXXVI.	
A trip by moonlight, ...		305
	CHAPTER XXXVII.	
Back from the mountains and off to the sea, ...		311
	CHAPTER XXXVIII.	
A terrible experience, ...		325
	CHAPTER XXXIX.	
Sad experiences, ...		333
	CHAPTER XL.	
Somebody in the house is dead, ...		341
	CHAPTER XLI.	
"Carrie, you have not answered me that question," . . .		350
	CHAPTER XLII.	
A great crime, ...		357
	CHAPTER XLIII.	
More developments, ...		362
	CHAPTER XLIV.	
Some very happy and some very unhappy people, . . .		372

THE NIEMANS.

CHAPTER I.

A SHOCKING ACCIDENT AND A SAD DISAPPOINTMENT.

“ No living man can send me to the shades
Before my time, no man or woman born,
Coward or brave, can shun his destiny.”—*Bryant.*

Late one afternoon, June, 188—, a lady sat in the waiting-room of the Illinois Central, in the city of Freeport. She was dressed in deep mourning. Her long, crape veil was thrown over her right shoulder displaying the left side of her face and sunken eyes in which there still lingered the light of youth. Physical suffering had given her shoulders a slight stoop. A journey of nearly thirteen hundred miles accomplished in less than two days, had wearied her, so that now as she arose and walked to the door and to the window, as she frequently did, she showed the weariness she felt by soon again sitting in her place near the ticket office.

A stranger looking at her dress, her thin, white hands, and her pale, marble-like face, would have been puzzled to know whether she were rich or poor. Neither did the quiet way in which she asked her questions speak much of her intelligence. When she walked to the ticket office and asked the agent when No. 10 freight would be along, she spoke in a low,

musical voice which betrayed little of the anxiety she felt.

There are times in life when the most stolid are lashed into emotion by the force of circumstances; but for a woman, and that woman a mother in search of a banished boy, to be calm in all her demeanor is scarcely probable or possible. The woman had long been a pupil in the school of sorrow, and had learned the bitterest lessons.

Mrs. Nieman, for that was the lady's name, knew that her son Nicholas, more commonly called Nick, was employed on freight train No. 10, on the Illinois Central Railroad. So she had been told by the superintendent who kept the time of the men on that part of the road. The conductor of the train which had brought Mrs. Nieman from Chicago, had told her that Freeport was the best place for her to see her boy. The train on which he was employed always stopped from one to two hours in that city. She had already been in the depot an hour, and the time for freight No. 10 had arrived. Just then the station-agent told her that No. 10 had been delayed an hour at Polo, and would consequently not be along for about that length of time.

In less than ten minutes after this time the rumbling of an express train was heard. As the train drew up to the station, Mrs. Nieman went to the window and pulling her veil over her face looked through its dark meshes at what could be seen in the train.

Some women when young and handsome, like to

be stared at, and are never happier than when they are conscious that they are attracting attention. This fondness for being observed continues when crow-feet are more evident than blushes, and the lips have lost their roses, and the eyes their sparkle.

Mrs. Nieman was not a beauty, nor did she at any time in her life love to be stared at, or to stare at others. Now that sorrow filled her heart, and the evidences of her journey detracted from her personal appearance, she drew her veil over her face. If she had not done so she might have materially changed her future; but so it is, very often a mere trifle determines a destiny.

Soon the train rolled out of the station on its way to Dubuque. Mrs. Nieman turned listlessly from the window, and seated herself in her chosen place by the ticket window. She did not know how long she sat, but she felt that she had slept, when the station-master tapped her on the shoulder, and informed her that the train she was waiting for had arrived. He said he would call her son into the depot to meet her.

The station-master had not seen any of the crew as yet, and did not know what had caused the delay in the train's arrival. His surprise may therefore be imagined when he learned from the conductor that the front brakeman had been run over by the engine and had been crushed out of all human semblance. At Polo the engine had been detached and had taken the usual supply of water. The signal had been given, and the engineer thought he saw Nick Nieman, the

front brakeman, standing against the front car awaiting the engine. The engineer had backed, and had awaited the signal that the coupling had been made; but when the signal was not given and the engineer could not see the front brakeman, the fireman had dismounted, and on going back, was shocked to find a human body literally crushed into a mass of bleeding flesh. The head, trunk, and one limb did not contain a whole bone.

A jury had been hastily summoned, and their verdict was that the front brakeman, known as Nick Nieman, had come to his death by accidentally falling on the track as the engine was being backed to couple to the train. It was this that caused the delay of the train No. 10, on the day that Mrs. Nieman sat in the depot at Freeport waiting for her son.

Every human soul, unless totally dead to the higher sensibilities which distinguish man from the brute, suffers when it witnesses that which causes distress in the bosom of a fellow being. It was this which caused the station-master to open his mouth and look strangely at the engineer who told him of the accident to the front brakeman. Finally he managed to say, "That young man's mother is now in the station waiting for him." This enlisted the sympathy of the engineer and the crew. After discussing the situation a moment they agreed that the station-master, who alone knew Mrs. Nieman, had best inform her of the death of her supposed son.

The station-master was a man of fine sensibilities.

For this reason communicating the sad intelligence just received was for him a difficult task. He could readily tell the people which of the two trains daily leaving the station, would bring them quickest to the city of Chicago. He never hesitated to give such information in language polite and easily understood. Then, too, he knew which road ran through the richest lands beyond the Mississippi, and he was willing to answer the most trying and trivial questions for all the people who were dissatisfied with their lot and thought to better it by going farther west; but this duty of communicating the sad news to the waiting mother of the death of her son, when she hoped to see him that very moment, alive and well, was new and exceedingly unpleasant.

He had arrived at the depot before he had really thought of just how he would begin to deliver his strange, sad message to the woman who, he had noticed, was already dressed in the habiliments of mourning. But a woman as thoroughly educated in the school of sorrow as was Mrs. Nieman, a woman who by a strange presentiment knows when anything awful is about to occur, is seldom overcome when at last she stands face to face with that which tries men's nerves, and wrings a woman's heart. Mrs. Nieman was such a woman, and the first to say anything coherent. "Tell me," she said, "is Nicholas dead?"

By this time some of the crew of the train had come into the station, and slowly but surely, Mrs. Nieman became acquainted with the facts. She learned too,

that the front brakeman had taken his place on the train at Bloomington that morning, without speaking to anyone except from a distance; but he had faithfully attended to his duty until the catastrophe at Polo.

It seemed to the engineer that Nick looked stouter than a few days before, when he had temporarily left the road on account of a severe illness which unhappily soon terminated and enabled him to return to his job in time to lose his life. The engineer confessed that he had spoken to Nick only at a distance that morning. A new fireman having come to him that day, he was busy watching him.

Mrs. Nieman listened to the account of her son's death without asking any questions, or in any way interrupting the engineer who narrated the sad occurrence. When he had finished, all was silence for a few moments. The men looked at each other without knowing what was the best thing to say or do. Mrs. Nieman was the first to find her voice. She quietly asked what had been done with her son's remains. The conductor told her that after the jury had viewed the body, and had learned that Nicholas had no relatives in the state, they had recommended that the body should be taken charge of by the company in whose employment he had been, but that he, knowing that Nicholas Nieman had relatives in Pennsylvania, had concluded to bring the body to Freeport. On arriving there he had intended to consult the railroad

authorities as to telegraphing to his friends in the east, asking for instruction as to what disposition should be made of the remains. The body, he added, was very much mutilated and would with difficulty be shipped to the old home.

Mrs. Nieman at once asked to see the body. The men again looked at each other. They tacitly agreed that it was not best for the mother to see the mangled form of her boy, so the conductor said: "Mrs. Nieman, your son is very much mangled, and on the whole we think it best that you be spared the pain which a view of the corpse, in its present condition would necessarily give you. We will ask the company to have your son's remains taken to the undertaker, and to-morrow, when we have done the best we can for it, we will show you the body." Mrs. Nieman was put into a hack and taken to the hotel where her son had boarded.

The undertaker had vainly endeavored to so arrange the remains that the mother could view and recognize them and he had done the best under the circumstances, to make the body presentable. A napkin was laid over the crushed head. (The train having been uncoupled at the crossing, the head of the unfortunate had been caught between the iron rail and the heavy plank of the crossing, and literally crushed out of shape.) Mrs. Nieman did not lift the napkin from the mass of crushed bone and torn flesh. The mangled

arm and side were neatly encased in a shroud, so that Mrs. N. really saw very little of the effect of the engine's work; nor did she recognize anything in the confined remains that made her either certain or uncertain that she saw the body of her boy.

The watch-pocket on the corpse's pantaloons bore the inscription, "Nicholas Nieman. 30, 7-16, 188—" and the tailor's name. This inscription made the undertaker feel sure that there could be no mistake in the identity. "It was Nicholas Nieman," he said, "the pantaloons proved that."

CHAPTER II.

A HISTORY AND A MYSTERY.

"Mystery such as is given of God, is beyond the power of human penetration, yet not in opposition to it."

—*Madame de Staël.*

The time for a fuller introduction into Nick Nieman's family has come. Inasmuch as the writer of every biography devotes some time to the describing of the birth-place and early surroundings of the persons whose life-history he is writing, we feel it a duty to lead our readers, in imagination, to the pleasant village where Nicholas Nieman and all the Nieman children first saw the light of day. This village is located in eastern Pennsylvania. It is not a famous town, and would have been little known, but for the fact that it was the birth-place of the Niemans. To prove to the average reader that it was not a famous town before this story brought it notoriety, we need only remind him that it never sent any of its sons to the state legislature or to the halls of congress. It has, however, always furnished its own justice of the peace, who has, as a rule, discarded "party, friendship, kind," and never received "boodle" or gave it, in the discharge of his official duties. The fact that such officers sat on the official bench in the town of —— is in itself sufficient to distinguish it; for it is a well

known truth that greater towns and cities than this same —— can seldom boast of such official capacity among their rulers.

It may be that the location of the town itself, in a part of the country where some of the voters still cast their vote for Andrew Jackson at every election, has something to do with the honesty of its public officers. The town is beautifully situated on a gentle declivity. At the base of the hill upon which the town is located there flows a creek, upon the banks of which Nicholas and his sister Eliza used to fish; but they seldom caught anything before they got home and unwillingly exhibited their torn and soiled clothing. The truth of the matter is, the creek contained few fish, and these were difficult to catch; but it holds a secret which this story of the Nieman family will gradually unfold, and which alone makes this little stream worthy of mention in this biography.

Another characteristic of the town of——is one common to towns, but we must mention it. The town contained a neat brick church, surrounded by a grave-yard, as the people call the cemetery in that locality. Quite close to this church and on the very edge of the grave-yard, stood the neat white house which was the home of the Niemans. In the day-time when there were no funerals, the Nieman children would play in the grave-yard. Among the many graves there was one of a murdered man. Some years before the Nieman children were born, a man whom no one in the neighborhood knew, was found in the

ravine of the creek we have already mentioned. His head was lying in the water. He had been stabbed in the heart, apparently by some one who had come upon him from behind, and unexpectedly, as he had evidently died without a struggle. So far no clue to the perpetrator of the deed had been found. Over this grave the children would scamper whilst the sun shone; but when twilight came, not all the sweet-meats in the village store would have been sufficient to tempt them to go near it. When the moon shone brightly, they always imagined the dark shadows of the cypress tree which at certain hours fell on the grave, to be a mantled and hooded figure, solemnly standing on that grave.

The Nieman children went to church before they remembered. They were accustomed to sit in the high-backed pews with their feet dangling in mid-air, and when they went to sleep without being well toward the back of the pew, which was seldom the case, they would occasionally fall into consciousness with a thud on the floor. Of course the domine who preached in that church only once in four weeks, and who therefore had much to say when he did preach, was entirely oblivious to all such slight noises as those occasioned by the fall of a youngster or two.

But the home-life itself is the most important in the formation of character. It is to the home of the Niemans, therefore, that we must not forget to introduce our readers. Nick was the youngest of three children born to George Nieman and his wife Hanna. Nick's

father was the best physician in the neighborhood in which the Niemans lived. As long as he kept sober he was eagerly sought after. Later in his life he had taken to drinking, and gradually but surely he went the downward road, until three years before Nick was born the doctor had become a perfect sot.

When Nick was ten years old the doctor was called out one evening to attend a case of extreme illness. He did not return home that night; but Mrs. Nieman was unconcerned, because he frequently remained away from home under similar circumstances. A rule to which Dr. Nieman strictly adhered, was never to attend a patient or to prescribe for one, when he himself was under the influence of liquor. He would spend days at a time drinking, but never at such times was he "at home" to any one. When he would come out of a spree he would attend to his business and remain perfectly sober for days. His friends noticed that each drinking-bout left him weaker, more irritable, and more unreliable.

But to return to the night in question,— though Mrs. N. gave herself no concern when her husband did not come home, on this particular evening she was filled with strange presentiments that something was not right with the doctor, and that a great sorrow was in store for her.

The first evidence she had that something had happened was next morning, when the horse and buggy with which her husband had gone away, stood at the front gate of the Nieman home.

Whilst she was trying to determine whether the horse had broken loose and come home, or whether the doctor had brought him, a messenger came running toward her, apparently greatly excited. As soon as he could get his breath, he said, "I am Jake Smith's hired man. Jake found your husband in the road opposite our barn, with a hole in his head, and cold and stiff as a poker. So he sent me to kind o' gently tell you, that perhaps the doctor was dead, or very sick. I most forgit what he did tell me to say; but these are the facts, and facts is stranger than fiction."

Soon the doctor was brought home. He had two holes in his head. The one looked as if it might have been made by the edge of a horse shoe. Whether he had been thrown out of his buggy, and struck his head on the sharp stone which was found near him, full of blood and hair, and which exactly fitted the one hole in his head, could not be satisfactorily determined by the farmer jury. If he fell on the stone the horse evidently kicked him afterward, for he had two holes, and there was only one blood-stained stone. One thing seemed strange. His watch and purse were both gone; and as they could not be found in his home, the conclusion arrived at was that some one had stolen them from him that night. But they saw no one wearing the watch, nor spending the doctor's money, so they gave their loss up as a mystery.

Mrs. Nieman felt the loss of her husband all the more keenly, because he died so unexpectedly and mysteriously. She was now left a widow with three

children. The oldest child was a son, Lee by name; the second was a daughter, eleven years of age; the third was Nick, to whom we have already been introduced.

After the doctor's estate was settled it was found that only about fifteen hundred dollars remained for the widow and her children. Mrs. Nieman's father, who was in comfortable circumstances, therefore invited her to his home. Here she still resided at the opening of this story.

Lee Nieman, the oldest of the family, soon became quite a help to his grandfather. He assisted with the work on the farm in the summer and attended public school in winter. When he was seventeen years of age he obtained a teacher's certificate and was selected by the directors of his district to teach the same school in which he had been a pupil. He continued teaching during the winter and going to school during the summer, until he was twenty years old. Having made up his mind to become a physician, he entered the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania. He graduated with credit, and in a few years he moved into the very home in which he was born. Here he soon won the confidence of the people, and gained a large practice.

Octavia, the only daughter of the family, as we have already seen, was a haughty child. Her name received at her baptism was Eliza. Her mother called her, "Liza," for short; but the child did not like Eliza. Liza she abominated. When she was twelve years old,

she read about Octavia, the devoted and loving wife of Mark Anthony. She resolved that just as soon as possible she would adopt the name, Octavia. When she introduced herself to strangers she said her name was Octavia; but her mother and schoolmates continued to call her Liza. So long as she stayed at her grandfather's she was plain Liza. When she was fifteen years old she learned dress making. At eighteen she had saved enough to enable her to enter the nurses' training-school in connection with the hospital on Blackwells Island, New York. Being a physician's daughter, she had no tuition to pay. Here we will leave her for the present. Among her classmates she is known as Octavia Newman. This, therefore, is her name for the future, but it costs her more annoyance as we shall presently see, than if she had remained plain Eliza Nieman,

Nick Nieman, having been born when his father was near the end of his career, did not inherit as strong a constitution as the other children. The Niemans were noted for their strength of character. This they inherited largely from their mother. Before the father fell into the drink-habit, we must confess, there was no more reliable man to be found in all that neighborhood. Nicholas felt in more ways than one the effect of his father's evil habit. The fact that others as well as we ourselves will bear the consequences of our evil lives ought to deter us from sin, even if we do not care for our own future. The great law of heredity, so plainly stated in the first commandment,

brings curses to many, where if the parents had lived virtuously, it would have brought blessings.

When Nick was seventeen he was not as strong as his brother had been at the same age; but he was by no means an invalid. His grandfather never seemed to like him as well as he did the other children of the Nieman family. He seemed to regard him as a sort of a scape-goat of his father's sins. We are not surprised, therefore, to know that the old gentleman said to him, soon after he had passed his eighteenth birthday, "Nicholas, you have eaten my bread for more than six years, without earning it. You are not likely to be of much use to me or anybody else. You had better put on your Sunday clothes and go West or somewhere. Here is a twenty-dollar gold piece to start you."

Nick took the money and the next day started West. He rode on a freight train and kept the double eagle in his pocket, a nest-egg for his future fortune. At Pittsburg he saw a brakeman lose his life between two cars. He immediately offered himself to take the place made vacant. His wish was made known to the proper authorities and Nick became rear brakeman on a train bound for Chicago. He continued a brakeman on the Fort Wayne and Chicago railroad for more than a year. He learned to know the city thoroughly; but always avoided the temptation which had robbed his father of his strength and usefulness. After some hesitation he was persuaded to accept a more lucrative,

but more irksome position on the road mentioned in the former chapter.

Mrs. Nieman had learned through a neighbor, who had been on a visit to Freeport, that he had frequently seen her son in the city, and believed him to be industrious and sober. Nick, whilst on the road between Pittsburgh and Chicago, had frequently written to his mother. When he left Chicago he had told her that he would not write any more until he had made his fortune. This had caused his mother to leave her home in quest of her boy, and if possible, persuade him to return home with her.

The day following the events narrated in the former chapter, the remains were buried by the railroad company. The funeral services were held at the parlors of the hotel at which Nick had boarded. Strange to say, nothing belonging to him could be found in the room which he had left only two days before, with the evident expectation of again returning. On the day before his death he had paid his bill, and had told the clerk that he thought some of going farther west. It seemed so strange that not over two dollars in money could be found in the pockets of the dead man. The hotel clerk said that when he paid his bill he had quite a roll of bank-bills remaining. He had jokingly said he would keep them toward his fortune.

The fact that so little money was found on the body of the dead man threw a mystery about the sad occurrence which no one could satisfactorily explain. What became of the roll of bills? If Nick had been

robbed, he had certainly not said a word to any one. From the time he had left his room at the hotel until his body was brought back, two days intervened. The last twenty-four hours of his life he had been seen by different persons on the road. First he had gone on a passenger train from Freeport to Bloomington, and a few hours after his arrival and reporting for duty, he had been on the train. What Nicholas had done the day previous no one knew. One of his acquaintances on the very day that Nicholas was killed, had gone to a second-hand store to purchase a satchel, and to his surprise, the satchel he had purchased had the address of Nicholas Nieman—partly erased, it is true, but still legible—written on the inside of it. Mrs. Nieman had identified this satchel as the very one her son had purchased when he left his grandfather's home. She herself had suggested that he should write his name into it. When the second-hand man was asked with regard to it, he seemed to know very little as to how he had gotten possession of it. First he said he purchased it with a lot of household goods; but when it was shown that this statement could not be correct, he said a young man, to whose personal appearance he had paid no attention, had brought it. He did know, however, he said, that the man did not look like a rail-roader, but more like a student. Finally he refused to answer any more questions. He said he remembered too little of the man who brought it, to say anything definite.

The clerk in the hotel remembered that Nicholas had a satchel in his hand when he paid his bill. He had asked Mr. Nieman whether he were leaving, and he had replied that he expected to return, but just how long he would remain when he did come back he could not say. He told the clerk not to hold his room for him. He could get that or another, when he did return.

Some of Nicholas' friends held to the theory that he himself had sold the satchel and bought a trunk, because it was known that he had accumulated too many books and clothing whilst at the hotel, to put them into a satchel. Nicholas had been accustomed to shut himself into his room during his spare hours, and when asked by his companion what he was doing, he would reply that he was trying to finish his education. But no books were left in his room and none of them could be found in the second-hand stores, so it was concluded that some one must have stolen his personal effects.

Others of his friends were suspicious that if the dead man was not Nicholas Nieman, a young man whom Nicholas had introduced as a cousin from the West, and who had disappeared just about the time of the accident, knew something of Nicholas' whereabouts. But no one seemed to know who this young man was or whence he had gone. Mrs. Nieman herself knew of none of her relatives who had recently gone West. Of course all these strange incidents with regard to Nicholas caused considerable gossip.

Some even suggested that he might have given his things away and then committed suicide. If any one had his possessions, it was not at all likely that they would speak of it, now that there were so many strange rumors.

Mrs. Nieman had little hope that her son was not dead. She did not know what to make of all the strange things in connection with his selling his satchel and the absence of all his personal effects, and the unknown companion; but she felt sure that if he were alive and read the papers, which contained the account of the accident and his mother's visit, he would think too much of her to let her endure the sorrow he knew his supposed death would be sure to cause his mother.

CHAPTER III.

A MURDER THREATENED AND A PRECIPITATE FLIGHT.

“ My death and life,
My bane and antidote are both before me.”—*Addison*.

For triumph of the engineer's skill and for grandeur and sublimity of scenery, the Denver and Rio Grande railroad is unsurpassed by any road on the American continent. It is justly called the “ Scenic line of the World.” Many are the stories of hairbreadth escapes, sudden and thrilling death, and sublime heroism, said to have occurred in the construction of this road. In addition to these, there are others of laborers who were robbed and murdered for their wages, or who, after weeks of hard toil, lost their all in a single night of debauchery. Why must dens of infamy of every kind be planted wherever the civilizing hand of man opens a harbor, builds a railroad, or lays the foundation of a city? Why should these persons who labor hardest for their money, be almost always the readiest to spend it?

We are not particularly interested in the construction of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad; but we are interested in one of the young men who for a time helped to lay track. This young man is rather more intelligent than the majority of his fellow-workers, is

about five feet nine inches in height and rather slight and weak-looking. His name was the eighth on the pay-roll, and for that reason he was familiarly known among his fellows as No. 8. So we shall call him for the present.

Number 8 was at work on that part of the road which extends from Salida to Pueblo, over which the train now takes the traveler in three hours. This young man was sober and reliable, and soon gained the confidence of the boss. At first he assisted in the grading of the road; but the foreman of the gang, whose work consisted in placing the rails in position, being short a hand, transferred our friend to this pleasanter and more lucrative work. He could readily learn to do almost any kind of work that did not require extraordinary mechanical skill, and therefore soon became proficient in his new place.

Cards formed the chief amusement of the men after their day's work was done. There seemed nothing else to do. There were no books for them, and if there had been, few would have been inclined to use them. Although they worked only ten hours per day, their work was hard, and they were usually very tired when evening came.

We may say what we please with regard to the establishment of reading rooms for the working classes. They are a necessity; but where men and women must labor twelve to fifteen hours daily, there is little inclination, because little mental vigor, for reading when at last the burden of the day's toil is laid by.

Every healthy human being ought to be willing to labor. Working eight to ten hours per day is strengthening to body and mind and prolongs life. It is only when the hours of toil are unduly prolonged that labor becomes a burden.

Notwithstanding the fact that the men were usually tired in this camp when the day's work was done, there were some who would have gladly spent a few hours in reading, had the opportunity been offered. There being nothing to read, the men played cards instead. Sometimes they played for the fun of it; more frequently they played for the drinks or for each other's hard-earned wages.

Number 8 had been asked again and again to accompany his chums to the saloon, until not to do so any longer seemed to make him the object of abuse. He finally concluded that he would go with them the very next time they would ask him. That time soon came, and that to his sorrow.

One Saturday evening, after he had worked more than a month, he was persuaded to join the rest of the men in a visit to Salida. Number 8 knew that the proposed visit meant cards and bad whiskey. He had learned to play cards as well as anybody on the section. He knew, too, what bad whiskey could do, and because he knew it so well, he had left it alone. The gang knew his sentiments; because he had always passed the bottle untouched. "This time," they said among themselves, "we will take him where there is enough to make him drunk, and drunk he shall be."

After their arrival at the few shanties which then composed Salida, they had entered a saloon and played for the drinks. Number 8 cheerfully paid when his side lost, but he would barely taste his glass. There seemed but one way to get him drunk, and that was to force the stuff down his throat. One of the party, a great, stalwart fellow, seized him from behind and pinioned his arms, whilst another pulled back his head and tried to pour some of the vile whiskey down his throat.

In less time than it takes to tell it, Number 8 had thrown himself from the box upon which he had been sitting and had upset the table upon which the cards had been dealt. One fellow, who had tried to hold his limbs, had been kicked and sent half way across the room. Meanwhile Number 8's coat, vest, and shirt had received the greater part of the contents of half a bottle of whiskey. Enough had gone down his throat to almost strangle him in his efforts to avoid it. His tormentors relaxed their hold for a moment. Number 8 sprang to his feet and made for the door. Before he could reach it, six revolvers were leveled at him; and such expressions as, "you can't go, sonny," and "not yet, if you please," greeted him. Quick as thought Number 8 pointed with his finger at the bar-keeper, and of course everybody looked. At the same time he fired into the crowd and ran out of the door. The half dozen shots that were fired into the darkness after him did no more harm than his own had done.

The reason Number 8 had drawn his revolver was because he for once had thoroughly lost his head. He was angry in the highest sense of the word. He felt that these men had tried to take away his liberty. He felt that they had no more right to compel him to drink than they had to take his money. He excused himself for shooting on the ground that he had acted in self-defense.

When he returned to camp that night, he did not go to the shanty where he was in the habit of sleeping, with some of the very men who had abused him most. He did, however, go to the boss of the section, who himself was a clever man, and did all in his power to have the men behave decently at all times. Number 8 told him frankly what had occurred. "Young man," said the boss, "you have acted rashly in shooting, but we will see what we can do for you when the men are sober. To-night you must stay with me."

Number 8 was only too glad to share the boss' quarters. The next morning, before breakfast, the boss and Number 8 went to the shanty where the men were gathered. They scowled at the new-comers, but said nothing. The boss was the first to break the silence. He said, "Men, I understand you had some trouble down at the saloon last night."

One man, the fellow who had been kicked, said, "Yes, that coward there (alluding to Number 8) kicked and abused some of us, and when he could do nothing else but fight, he drew his revolver instead,

and shot. We would have killed the —— —— coward," he added, "if we could have caught him."

"Well, gentlemen," said the boss, "I do not ordinarily interfere in the quarrels of men, but I do say, that because you wished to get drunk was no reason why you should try to compel anyone else to do as you do. Now that you are sober you will admit that what I say is true. All I wish you to do is to let by-gones be by-gones. This young man says he has nothing against any of you. Are you satisfied to go on in your work together, or shall I discharge the whole of you? I can telegraph to Denver to-day, and to-morrow have all the men I need."

"No necessity for doin that, boss," said the fellow who had been kicked, and who was really the leader among them. "I guess the men here are willens to let the matter drop for the present, since that coward asks you to protect him."

"Well," said the boss, "I do not wish to discuss this matter any further. If you will allow Number 8 to work without molesting him, all right. I must see that he, or any man that works for me, has justice done him."

So the matter ended that day. Number 8 went to the shanty; but his companions were sullen all that day, and whenever the opportunity offered they made sarcastic remarks, and tried to wound his feelings. But he was too wise to be drawn into a quarrel. He paid as little attention to them and their taunts as possible. That night he slept in his old place. The next

morning he went to his work as usual. So did the others. It happened that Number 8 worked at riveting the plates which hold the different pieces of rail together, and was consequently separated from the rest.

When the section-boss came around, he told Number 8 that he had just overheard the rest of the gang quietly discussing how they might get even with him. He said, "You know these men. You had better leave, and thus avoid serious trouble."

Inasmuch as this was the first day after pay, there was not much to lose. Early the next morning found Number 8 on his way toward Colorado Springs. It was a beautiful morning. The snow-covered cliffs sparkled in the morning sunlight long before our traveler felt the warmth of the first rays in the valley. Pike's Peak looked like burnished silver.

"Round its breast the rolling clouds were spread,
Eternal sunshine settled on his head."

Number 8 thought he would go to Colorado Springs and from thence to Chicago, and, if possible, get lighter work there. Two or three miles from camp he met the construction train. On this he rode as far as Cañon City. From thence he hoped to follow the trail of the miners, and in two or three days get to Colorado Springs. He preferred this to going direct on the train; he would spend some time in the mines if opportunity offered.

He walked all day. Toward evening he left the trail in the Cañon and followed an indistinct path over

one of the foot-hills, hoping to shorten the distance around the spur. It proved farther than he had calculated. Just as the sun sank to his burning bed, Number 8, from the summit of the hill, looked over the weary miles he had come. Far in the distance he saw the smoke arise from the camp-fires of the men on the road. How he longed for a piece of the salt pork and slap-jacks he knew were preparing over those camp-fires! He turned and trudged wearily on. He crossed the ridge and saw rather a wide cañon below him; but he was too tired to enter it that night. He sank wearily beneath the boughs of a big pine. He thought of his home, far away, and scarcely knew whether to blame or congratulate himself on his escape from the contractor's men. Would he on the morrow rise from his lowly bed? The prospect was not, to say the least, very cheering. Number 8 was too tired to think much. Tired nature asserted herself, and her sweet restorer, sleep, stole on him ere he was aware.

CHAPTER IV.

A CAMPING-PARTY AND SOME STRANGE DISCOVERIES.

“Earth has built the great watch-towers of the mountains, and they lift their heads far up into the sky, and gaze ever upward and around to see if the Judge of the world comes not.”

—*Longfellow.*

In the course of the events of this narrative the time has come to introduce our readers to a party of campers in the “Golden State.” The camp is located in the mountains, twenty miles from the city of Los Angeles. It is July, and the moon is at her full. The crags cast long, dark shadows into the cañons, so that they look like openings into a bottomless pit. Far off to the west there is a broad expanse which glistens like silver. It is where the rays of the full-moon are reflected from the waters of the Pacific.

Around the camp all is serenity. The burros are corralled, and four of the campers are asleep beneath the white folds of one tent, and four others, the ladies of the party, are in another, and in a similar state of forgetfulness.

Whilst they are asleep, let us quietly introduce the campers: Three of the ladies are from New York City. Two of them are mere girls. Their name is Dives. They are the only surviving members of their family. When at home they live in a fine house on Fifth Avenue. They have a good income. Weak lungs

have driven them from the city, first to Colorado, and later to the Pacific Coast, where they have spent the winter. Charmed with the climate, they have tarried far into the summer, and with their medical nurse, whom they have brought with them from the Metropolis, and a cousin, they have left the city for a week in the mountains. The men are, one of them, a lawyer, about thirty-five years of age; his name is James Sharp. The other is Mr. Swivel, who, with his sister, whom we have already mentioned, is a cousin of the Dives. The other two men are the cook and the muleteer of the party. The former is a red-haired, greasy-faced fellow, very fat, but a very good cook. The latter is a young man, thin, fair and not too strong-looking. He was sent by the owner of the mules, at the foot of the mountain, to act in the double capacity of guide and muleteer. He was introduced to the party four days ago as Felix.

Only one person in the party is at all impressed with the last mentioned men. This is the nurse from New York. There is nothing very striking in either their personal appearance, or in the men themselves. A mere circumstance, so she persuades herself, has aroused her interest in the cook, and then in the muleteer. Having left her watch in the tent one day, she had gone out alone to admire the scenery, which she professed keenly to appreciate. She sat for some time listlessly looking down into the lovely San Gabriel Valley. A little to the left and almost beneath the place she sat, lay the town of Monrovia with its cluster

of buildings at the centre of the town, and with here and there a white or brown house in an orange grove, looking like a piece of plaster or bronze in a frame of emerald mosaics. In the distance a low cloud indicated the place where "the Angel City" of Southern California lay encircled by a veil of mist, as if to protect her from the rude gaze of the genii of the mountains. For miles the valley, with here and there a Eucalyptus grove, reminded the beholder of Pope's lines,

"Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn;
To leafless shrubs the flowery palm succeeds,
And od'rous myrtle, to the noisome weeds."

She had been startled in her reverie by a noise among the sage. On looking up she had seen the cook, who came to call her to the tent to luncheon. She asked him the time of day. Without saying anything he drew a gold hunting-case watch from his vest-pocket and opened it before her face. She noticed the name "Nieman" on the lid. The lady asked no questions about the watch; but the name Nieman was on it, that was sure. What impressed her more than the name, were three nicks made deeply into the ring of the upper lid. She had often seen the same or similar nicks on her father's watch. He had told her he put a new nick in the case every time a new baby came to their home. The second nick was there for her. How did the cook get this watch? she asked herself again and again.

After luncheon that day she walked out to the side of the tent, and there saw a large pocket-knife, sticking, back upward, in a tree, with the muleteer's coat hanging upon it. For some reason she stepped up to the tree, and saw on the bone handle of the knife the initials, N. N., It now seemed to her that fate, or something, had first shown her the watch, so as to deepen the impression of thus unexpectedly showing her her brother's knife. She stood a few moments, gazing at the knife, when the muleteer came and pulled it out of the tree and put it into his pocket. As the muleteer walked away, she felt the resemblance of this man to her brother Nicholas very forcibly.

By this time my reader is convinced that the nurse of the New York girls is none other than Octavia Newman, Mrs. Nieman's "Liza." Perhaps he is also asking himself whether the muleteer is not Liza's brother. The reader's conviction with regard to Octavia is correct, but she herself is far from sure that the muleteer is her brother. It is true, she knew that his funeral had been held in Freeport, years before; but her mother had never persuaded herself to think that he was really dead. She herself had worn mourning to tell her neighbors that she sorrowed for her dead brother, a fact which they otherwise would not have known. Her brother when he died was much fairer than this man; but perhaps this man was only tanned. Her brother's hair was light, the muleteer's was yellowish; but his nose, mouth, and color of the eyes certainly were very much like Nick Nieman's.

She had once mentioned to the Dives the fact that her brother Nicholas had been driven from home by his grandfather. She did not know of any great wrong that her brother had done; but she mentioned it at a time when she was dilating on the extensive wealth of her grandfather, and the position she held in his affections. Her grandfather would in all probability give her the greater part of his wealth. Then she would build a hospital of her own, and admit only the refined and intelligent. The Dives had then shown more interest in the brother that was driven from home than in her grandfather's great wealth, or Miss Octavia's plans. They asked her so many questions about her brother's going away, how it affected his poor mother, (and what became of her brother afterward, and whether her grandfather did not feel remorseful when he learned that Nicholas was killed,) that she detailed so much of her family life, that she felt her face redden with needless shame, and she now recalled how angry she had been at herself because of the unfortunate turn she permitted her conversation to take. She remembered, too, how she had resolved then and there that she would never even intimate that she had the slightest suspicion that her brother was still alive. In fact up to this time she had not given herself much concern as to whether he was alive or not. Now she resolved that she would not even intimate to the Dives or to anybody that she had the slightest suspicion that Felix the muleteer, was her brother, come

to life, or that he had not been killed at all. She admitted that Felix was by no means bad looking. She could have seen, too, had she been able to look farther than her nose, that the young man was brave and possessed of character; but Octavia on this occasion, as she had often done before, allowed nothing to come between her and her false pride. Octavia, therefore, said nothing of her suspicions, and treated Felix with the same condescension after she had seen the knife as before. Why should not anybody else than her brother have a knife with "N. N." engraved upon it? Beside, everybody thought her brother dead. Her mother's wish that her son might be living had been father to the thought that he really was alive. It is true, a separation of five years in a growing boy, might even cause his relatives not to recognize him. Pshaw! She would not bother her head about it. Whether Felix was her brother or not, he was a muleteer, and that was enough for Miss Octavia Newman, M. D.

That same afternoon the party broke up camp and started for Los Angeles. Octavia rode on a burro believed to be the tamest, because the oldest, in the outfit. It so happened that he for a time lagged far in the rear; but of a sudden he seemed possessed of all the perversity and animation of the days of his youth. He crowded by the others where the trail was narrowest. He whisked his tail in the air, and kicked until poor Octavia begged Felix to stop him. The attempt nearly cost him his life. Planting himself at the out-

side of the trail, he grabbed the bridle. He succeeded in turning the mule, but he himself went over the side of the trail where it was steepest, and had it not been for the strength of the bridle and the mule's backing propensities Felix would have had a fatal fall. When the mule stopped, Octavia went on. In her fall she scratched her face in the sage, and bruised her knees, and tore her gloves which saved her delicate palms.

There were several things that were firmly impressed upon the minds of the Dives girls during this trip. One of these was the grandeur of the scenery. They, no less than Octavia, feasted their eyes on the magnificent view that stretched before them during the few days that they sojourned in cloud-land. Another thing which impressed them as much as the scenery, was that they had never enjoyed such appetites in all their lives before, as they enjoyed during their encampment. What was more, "good digestion had waited on their appetites, and health on both." They knew that exercise and atmosphere contributed to these results, but they also attributed not a little to the skill of the cook.

Whatever may be said of Byron's lines,

"Heaven sends us good meats, but the devil sends us cooks,"

the Dives were convinced that this cook understood his art. He was not at all a fine specimen of humanity. His stomach was unduly extended by constant tasting and feasting on the viands he himself

prepared, so that it would have been a convenience to carry it in a sling, or better still, to let some one else carry it on his back after its possessor, had that been possible; his face was round as a full-moon; his eyes were little, deep-set and cunning; his hair was red as glowing coals. When his face remained unshaven for a week it looked like a pudding sticking full of the beards of red wheat. His manners were excessively polite. His character—well, we do not know him sufficiently to say much of his character. Character cannot be read at a glance. It requires study, association, to tell a man's character, especially if he tries to dissemble.

But the Dives thought they could tolerate even so homely a man as this cook, if they could enjoy the results of his art. Of course they lost the edge to their appetites when they got to New York, although they had this same cook. We have thus far simply called him the cook, without giving him a name. The girls asked him his name, and he gave them a name wherewith they should call him; but in all probability it was only assumed, so we will continue to know him as "the cook." There is not much in a name, anyhow, until it stands for character, or the lack of it.

The Dives girls themselves asked this cook on the way home from the encampment to call at their place of sojourn in Los Angeles. He came the same evening of their arrival in the city. When the elder of the girls told him why he had been asked to call, it

did not require much skill to read the feeling of satisfaction which made itself manifest in the fat face and twinkling eyes. This satisfaction was increased when an offer of such wages as the fat man had not received for many days was made him. Of course he tried to conceal his pleasure. He said, he did not know whether he really wished to return to New York. He had been there years ago, but he had found the winters excessively cold and the summers fearfully hot, and the atmosphere of all New York kitchens close and stuffy, but the change even to a worse climate might do him good. So the fat cook accepted the proposition of the New Yorkers, and the girls themselves, had they just then been endowed with the power to see spirits, would have seen their guardian angel tremble. Perhaps if they would have known what Octavia thought she knew about the watch this same fat cook carried, they would have had him arrested on suspicion of having been the murderer of Octavia's father; but to convict him would have been quite another matter. The watch alone would not have been sufficient to prove that the cook had stolen it from Mr. Nieman, or anybody, much less that he had killed the aforesaid gentleman. Octavia herself soon stopped thinking about the watch, for a time, at least.

The Dives had now finished their visit to the "Golden State" and within about a week afterward they were ready to return to their home. Of course Miss Newman was to return with them. Octavia scarcely knew whether to be pleased or otherwise

when she heard that the cook, who had given such satisfaction on the camping trip, would accompany them to New York, there to be installed in the kitchen of the Dives. What surprised her still more was the fact that Mr. Sharp was now on his way to hire Felix to become the coachman for the Dives. The cook had suggested it, saying that he knew Felix wished to go farther east, and that as a coachman he was "A, I." The Dives themselves saw enough of Felix to believe that he would make them a good coachman.

The fact that these two men were to go with them to New York seemed like a cruel fate sent to haunt and torment Octavia. Had it not been for a letter which Octavia at about this time received, and which threw her into a fever of happy anticipations, she would have felt the workings of the seemingly cruel fate all the more keenly.

CHAPTER V.

A FORTUNE; BUT HOW TO GET IT?

“Pride (of all others the most dangerous fault)
Proceeds from want of sense or want of thought.”

—*Dillon.*

The day after the arrival of the camping-party and several days before the Dives were to start for New York, Octavia received a letter from the hospital on Blackwells Island. On breaking the seal she found another sealed envelope inside, addressed to “Miss Liza Nieman.” As she listlessly broke the second seal, she wondered how anybody at the hospital could know that she was Liza Nieman. She had never told anyone. This flitted through her mind as she broke the seal; but imagine her surprise when she read:—

“OMAHA, NEB., *June—, 188—.*

MISS LIZA NIEMAN,

I beg leave to inform you that by the death of Peter True, formerly of ———, Pa., you have come heir to a large cattle ranch, twenty-five miles from this city, together with a two-story house, etc., in this city. The estimated value of this property is \$25,000.

Please prove yourself the Miss Liza Nieman intended by the will, and relieve your servant, the administrator,

JOHN BAER, ESQ.”—

So soon as Octavia read this letter she knew who Peter True was, although she had not heard from him for years. She promptly burst into tears. Had anyone seen her weep, he would have been convinced that there was no real grief in the spinster's tears.

Peter True and Eliza had known each other in their childhood. He had lived on a farm joining the village. His parents had died when he was quiet young, and there being no relative to care for him, a Mr. True had adopted him and given him his own name. All this occurred before Peter was able to realize that Mr. True was not his father, and Mrs. True not his mother. From his earliest recollection the Trues had treated him as if he were their own child, and so Peter never grieved when he was told by the neighbors that he was an adopted child. Octavia, or rather Liza, as little Peter knew her, had always when she was displeased with him, promptly reminded him that he was only a "'dopted child."

As she grew older the spirit within her began to assert itself. She began to lord it over Peter completely, so that he scarcely dared to call his soul his own in her presence. Of course he could no longer play with her the live-long day, as he had done in his early childhood; but, whenever they met, she showed her regal spirit, and in all her conduct toward him tried to impress him with her superiority. She frequently told him of the books she was reading, and times without number informed him that it would not

be long before she would leave him for good. In the end Peter left the village before she was ready to go.

Peter's childish love for Liza did not die as he grew into manhood. One debt he owed to this same love for the proud girl. It had inspired him to do something in the world; to be somebody. With him this resolution was guided by good common sense, which he showed on all occasions of his short life, except when he insisted on loving this same haughty girl.

When he was eighteen years old, Mr. True gave him permission to go or to remain in the home that had so long sheltered him. He had at once asked Octavia's advice, and she had promptly told him to go away. He thought over the matter for some time after she had given him her advice, and finally made up his mind to go west. When he told her his decision she grasped him warmly by the hand, and showed more affection than she had ever done before.

A few weeks after this Peter True was ready to start. Of course he came to say good-by to Octavia, as he had for the last few years been in the habit of calling Eliza, because she insisted on it, and because he knew it pleased her. We cannot dwell upon the way the girl spurned his heart as he laid it at her feet in the ardor of his love. The utmost she would promise him was that she would answer his letters. This promise she kept for a little while, but soon she broke it. Meanwhile Peter True was finding friends and lucrative employment. It was not long until he had a quarter section of land, and was farm-

ing it and pasturing cattle on other acres adjacent. Soon he bought more. He then grew rich rapidly. He still hoped to make the proud girl now in the city, his own; but death, like an untimely frost, had come and blasted all the tenderest hopes of life. He died of a fever just two weeks after he had made his will, and four weeks before Octavia received the letter to which we have already alluded, and which was destined to affect her life so seriously.

She distinctly remembered how poor Peter, the night he had begged her, with quivering lip, to become his wife, had given her the unsolicited promise that he would never forget her to his dying day, and that if he ever got rich in "the West," she would hear from him. Octavia had thought Peter True too dumb and too Dutch to have a place in her heart. She had turned from him in disdain, scarcely flattered by his attentions. It must be remarked, that truer heart never beat than this same Peter True's; honester soul never crossed the "Father of Waters" than he.

Octavia never thought of this. What engrossed her was the question how to prove that she, the refined, the learned Octavia Newman was the one intended by the will. Her friends, the Dives, must not know it; even though their medical adviser, who always felt herself patronized by the Dives, was now an heiress. Could Mr. Sharp, whom Octavia thought exceedingly clever, not help her? Should she interview the muleteer and find out whether he was her brother Nick, and then take him with her, to identify her? Hor-

rors! No! The Dives dare not know, and Mr. Sharp dare not know, that she for a moment thought Felix her brother. Why not telegraph to Lee Nieman, M.D., asking him to meet her at Omaha, on important business? The plain, blunt, country doctor had, the last time he saw her, said: "Octavia, pride is the never-failing vice of fools. Beware of it, or it will make you a laughing-stock with all sensible people." She had cut him then and there. For seven years she had not written to him. The more she thought the more she realized that she could not prove her identity by the people she had met since she had entered the hospital. She had not even registered as "Eliza Nieman, —, Pa." She had given her address as Reading, Pa.

All the next day when she and the Dives were getting ready to start on the return journey, Octavia's pride and love of wealth fought long and hard in her soul. She felt that her brother, the doctor, would help her if she would ask him. He could take with him, she knew, the testimony of a thousand persons as to his standing in the community. But why not punish her brother by getting her fortune herself, and then when she was richer than he, write him a patronizing letter, asking him to come and visit her in her chateau on the banks of the Hudson? What a conquest that would be! The thought delighted her.

Could she not show the letter to Mr. Sharp, the attorney, and tell him that Peter True had nicknamed her Liza Nieman. The name in the will, she would tell him, was simply to remind her of the good times

they used to have together. She would adopt this plan and Mr. sharp would see that she received her money.

Soon the day for the journey arrived, but strange to say she had not yet consulted Mr. Sharp. An invisible power seemed to hold her back. The party consisted of Octavia Newman, the fat cook, and what was a surprise to all, Mr. Sharp, and of course, the Dives. They took the "No. 2 Daily" over the Santa Fe, *en route* for New York. At Pasadena they were joined by Felix, the muleteer. Felix had been only too glad to quit his old job, which had meant so much hard work and such little pay.

It is needless to add that the ladies and Sharp traveled in a palace car; and that Felix and the cook did not. If moral worth would have determined the accommodation, the party would have been differently divided. The mighty dollar gives standing and artificial value. Sometimes the silver-plating comes off this artificiality in the friction with other lives. Then we are willing to acknowledge the fraud; but not so long as any of the plating remains, will we confess that we have been deceived. We do not mean to intimate that because a man can afford to travel in a palace car, he is therefore a rascal; but we do say that this age forgets, that "Wealth is a weak anchor, and that glory cannot support a man; this is the law of God, that virtue only is firm, and cannot be shaken by a tempest."

She did not see Felix after he boarded the train, until they arrived at Barstow, where they had dinner.

She had not seen him at the table. He had probably eaten at the lunch-counter, which, in its way, gives a man with little money an excuse for thinking that he has eaten something. The coffee and dough-nuts of the lunch-counter do the rest, so that after such a meal or two the traveler can scarcely excuse himself for having eaten at all. Whatever may be said with regard to the lunch-counter, we must admit that even it is far in advance of what those enjoyed who crossed the plains in the "prairie-schooner."

It would be useless to note every detail in this journey of Miss Newman and her friends. We might speak of a railroad wreck, but there was none; of a hold-up, in which the engineer was compelled to detach the express car, and in which the express messenger was wounded in his fidelity to defend the company's property; but whilst it may seem almost incredible to you, kind reader, there really was no "hold-up" on this trip.

CHAPTER VI.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

“ Chance will not do the work,—chance sends the breeze;
But if the pilot slumber at the helm,
The very wind that wafts us toward the port
May dash us on the shelves. The steersman’s part
Is vigilance, blow it rough or smooth.”—*Scott*.

The sun was high next morning when Number 8 awoke. He felt very hungry and stiff; but he arose, rubbed his eyes, and looked about him. There was not much to see. He went forward some distance and mounted a rock. From this eminence he had a good view of the valley he was entering. He could at first see no signs of life in the valley. He saw in the distance a hut, and on looking closer, he spied a horse feeding not far from the hut.

Having eaten his last bite the previous noon he was very hungry and weak; but the hope of getting something to eat urged him forward. When he reached the cabin he found everything closed. The door was locked, but near by he found an ax which together with a few sticks of wood, were the only evidence that somebody expected to return. He did not wait for that somebody to return, but took the ax and knocked in the door. On entering and opening the rude closet he found two loaves of bread and a can of something which he did not take time to examine.

For the first time in his life number 8 was a thief, but not from choice. Byron has well said :

“ Man is a carnivorous production
And must have meals, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live like wood-cocks upon suction,
But like the shark and tiger, must have prey.”

Number 8 greedily devoured a loaf of bread before he quit the cabin. After he was a mile away and saw no one, he thought of his stolen can, expecting to find fruit of some kind; but imagine his surprise when he read “Royal Baking Powder,” in large letters on the box. He threw the box into the grass in disgust.

As he went on toward the trail he had left the day previous, he became convinced that a drove of cattle had recently been pastured in the cañon, which here was a mile in width and several miles in length. The hut which he had visited an hour before belonged to the herders, and not to miners, as he had supposed.

For a time number 8 had forgotten about the horse, but a neigh attracted his attention. Looking up he saw the animal approaching. Number eight made up his mind to have a ride on the horse at least as far as the trail. A rope around the animal's neck trailed behind him. Number 8 soon caught the horse, and making a bridle out of the rope, mounted him, and not long afterward he was riding toward the trail he had left the previous day. He rode several miles toward the creek along which the main path lay. Having arrived at the creek he drank again and again. Then he tied the rope around a limb, and having fastened the horse,

he sat down in the shade to rest and think. He had not rested long before the horse showed signs of uneasiness, and almost immediately afterward he felt strong arms clutch him around the elbows, and saw a face at the side of his own. At the same time he heard someone say, "Ah, my brave cavalier, you are caught at last. Where did you purchase your horse? Where are the other gentlemen?" These and other questions were asked Number 8 as one of two men rapidly bound him. He was then placed on the horse he had found near the shanty. The rope rein was fastened to the saddle of one of the two horses upon which his captors had come, and which they had left at a little distance. They then started for the cabin which Number 8 had left a few hours before.

As soon as Number 8 recovered from his surprise he tried to explain; but the spokesman of the party only laughed, and said he never knew a horse thief who could in so short a time manufacture so good a story. The fellow who did the hugging whilst Number 8's hands were being tied was a big, dark-faced man with straight, black hair and a vicious looking mustache. He said nothing to Number 8, and very little to his companion and that in a tongue unknown to our friend.

When the party reached the cabin and found the door broken, the spokesman fairly jumped from the ground with wrath. He vowed he would hang and then shoot the wretch, if ever in his life he would be able to find him. After the spokes-man came out of

the cabin and found that two loaves of bread and a can of baking-powder were the only things missing, he became more calm. Unfortunately, he had found a handkerchief in the cabin which bore the initials, "N. N." He closely and suspiciously looked at Number 8 when he came out of the cabin. An idea seemed to strike him. He pulled Number 8's coat off, but found no name. The figure 8 was all he found on the front of his shirt. He next examined Number 8's cap and found the initials N. N. "Well," said he, "you are a bold thief. You steal or help to steal a dozen horses one night. You ride back the next day and plunder the cabin where you stole the horses and then rest at the creek not a mile away. I have a great mind to hang you before the boys come back just for the satisfaction of doing it myself."

Number 8 was now unceremoniously pulled off his horse, and his pistol and knife taken from him, and he himself told to keep quiet. One man sat near him with his revolver in his hand, whilst the other lead the horses away. In a few hours half a dozen more men came, reporting that they had seen nothing of the missing horses, nor of those who had stolen them. Our spokesman said, "The cook and I have been more successful." He then briefly narrated the events of the afternoon, when they all joined in a derisive laugh.

The cook who had been relieved from his watching by Number 8's side, had gotten supper. The whole party supped on fried bacon and hoe-cake, the cook explaining that because there was no baking-powder,

there could be no biscuit. Poor Number 8 was offered some bacon, but his appetite had deserted him.

After supper Number 8 was again interviewed as to the way he had taken the horse found in his possession, and why he had entered the cabin. But however much he tried to make the matter plain, he was simply jeered. The whole party agreed to hang him both because of what he had, and of what he had not confessed. They were divided as to the time when the sentence should be executed. Some thought that it ought to be done that night, others that they ought to wait until next morning. The fact that the party was very tired more than anything else, delayed the hanging.

Number 8 was now securely bound, hands and feet. A thin rope was passed around his waist and then around the waist of the man who was to remain with him during the night. This man and Number 8 remained outside on some hay; the rest of the party slept in the cabin.

Soon everybody except Number 8 slept. All sleep had deserted him. He thought of his childhood-home, of his friends' tear-stained faces as he saw them on the day he left home. He thought of the opportunities he had neglected, and of the death which awaited him. No wonder that he prayed. Nearly everybody prays when death stares him in the face. Death imminent, is a wonderful cure for skepticism. Number 8 felt certain that his death was only a question of a few hours. In all probability, when the sun would again

illuminate the eastern skies he would make the change which never changes.

Number 8's thoughts were interrupted by a slight noise near him. Almost immediately after the noise, the moon which had been shrouded in a bank of clouds, burst forth in all her effulgence. Its light revealed a woman stealthily approaching. He thought she might be a spectre from the little noise and the quickness of her movements. She put her fingers to her lips when she was near him, as a token of silence. Drawing a long knife from the folds of her dress, she cut the cords which bound his hands and feet, and which attached him to the waist of his sleeping guard. Number 8 arose without being told to do so. With a nod of her head she beckoned him to follow her, and then she walked rapidly away. Poor Number 8 crept painfully after her, scarcely able to conceal both his pain and his pleasure at being free.

After they had walked several hundred yards they suddenly came upon three ponies, in the care of a negro boy, fifteen or sixteen years of age. The slight, girlish form, of medium height, which had thus far silently led our friend, now found a voice. She said, "Mount this mustang. Do not try to guide your steed, but urge him. After riding awhile, you will come to a stone house. Dismount there and go along the road which leads in the direction of that star (pointing to Venus, which had just risen over the top of the mountain in front of them) and by and by you will come to the railroad. If you hurry you will be in

time for the freight which passes the crossing of the road at about 4:30 A. M. Take the train and get out of this. If those fellows catch you again they may hang you before anybody can interfere."

Poor Number 8 wanted to fall on his knees in thanks to his deliverer; but she told him there was no time for it. She urged him to go. She did not even give her name. Our friend then mounted, and the mustang started at a lively pace. In about half an hour he came to a commodious stone house. Here he dismounted as directed, and started on foot. As he kept on his way he could not help wondering how it happened that this woman should have come to rescue him. Why was she out at this time of the night? Who could she be? It was evident to him that she lived in the house to which the mustang had brought him; but why did not she and the colored youth accompany him?

After Number 8 realized that no one was following him, he also became conscious of the fact that he was very tired; but he kept up a brisk walk, which he occasionally quickened into a run. When he had thus hurried along for fully an hour, he heard the quick, short, but distant shriek of an engine. He now ran at the top of his speed, and some minutes before the train came up to the crossing of the road, Number 8 was already there. He drew out his watch and saw that it lacked five minutes to 4:30 A. M. As the train drew up, it stopped at the tank to take water, and as Number 8 knew enough of how men went about steal-

ing a ride on a freight, he was soon quietly nestled in an empty box car.

When the sun had risen, the train arrived at Colorado Springs. He now resolved to go on to Denver. His breakfast at Colorado Springs was enjoyed as he had enjoyed few in his life. It so happened that a large shipment of cattle was being made from that place that day, and a man being needed, Number 8 was duly installed as king over cattle, if not as a cattle king. It did not matter to him that he was going to Chicago, instead of remaining at Denver, so long as he was going beyond the reach of "Judge Lynch" and his jury, which had so recently condemned him, though innocent, to such an ignominious death.

Much has been said with regard to the necessity of summarily dealing out death to criminals in the newer countries of our great land. What may have been said of the justice of the process years ago, when these countries in the west were isolated and a law unto themselves, the time when such a process can be defended in any section, has passed. Often the guilty parties helped to punish the innocent. Oftener still the guilty were miles away when the innocent suffered. Then, too, the punishment was usually out of all proportion to the crime. For instance, the punishment for horse stealing was always death, whilst frequently the man who killed his fellow for a supposed insult, was looked upon as a hero instead of a murderer, as he really was. With all this we admit that in the early days of frontier life, "Judge Lynch" and his

jury often did valuable service, and inspired a wholesome respect and awe in the worst criminals.

It would be useless to follow every detail of Number 8's movements and duties in this journey to Chicago. Let us add that, to make the journey in charge of several cattle cars is not near as easy or as safe as in a first-class Pullman. As he had never ridden in the latter way, he did not appreciate the difference. In addition to stirring the cattle when they became restless, Number 8 had time for thought. For more than one reason, he came to the conclusion that he must return to the stone house at which a few days before he had so hastily dismounted. He must learn more about the inmates of that home, and particularly about the young woman who had almost miraculously saved his life. He also made up his mind that when he did return, he would remain away from the shanty in the valley.

Exactly two weeks after Number 8 had left Colorado Springs, he was there again. His journey to Chicago had cost him nothing. It had netted him something, so that instead of having less bills sewed up between the lining of his coat, which was his bank, he had more. Whatever may be said of the security of Number 8's bank, so far neither its cashier or president had gone away and taken the funds from him, because he was both president and cashier, as well as board of directors. This kind of banking would soon paralyze the commerce of the world, but for a time it did first rate in Number 8's case. Once

whilst at Chicago, he came near losing bank, capital and all. He had hung his coat on a post at the stock-yard, whilst warm and busy, meaning to keep an eye upon it; but when he looked for it, it was gone. His heart sank within him when he thought of the \$500.00 in bills, his all in the world, and the proceeds of seven years' saving. Fortunately the tramp who stole it did not get away with it. Number 8 saw him less than an hour afterwards lying in the shadow of some cars, with the coat on his back. In true western style, Number 8 drew his revolver and made the tramp take it off. Had the tramp known the true value of his booty, he would not have lingered, but would have put Number 8's money into circulation.

Before Number 8 left Colorado Springs he was cleanly shaven and well dressed. When the train left him that afternoon at the little station near the water-tank, no one would have recognized him as Number 8. It was easy for him to find the road toward the stone house; but he realized that he had made a mistake in landing there in the evening instead of the morning. Where would he spend the night, or get something to eat? Certainly not at the shanty in the valley. Of all these things he first seriously thought as he trudged along the road which was to take him to the stone house.

Whilst he was in the midst of his meditation, and beginning to be convinced that he had come on a fool's errand, he heard the rapid approach of a wagon. Turning around he had barely time to see that a pair

of mustangs were violently galloping in front of a spring-wagon, upon which sat a young girl holding one line in her hand, whilst the other was whirling on the ground. In an instant he took in the situation, and placed himself between the narrow mountain road and the opposite steep slope of the hill. Behind him the bank terminated in a sheer precipice a hundred feet or more high. Less than a hundred feet ahead of him the road made a sudden turn around the shoulder of the mountain. The team must be stopped before it reaches this point, or destruction of horses and driver will be sure. With a loud "whoa!" he has made a clutch at the bridle, but he can not stop the run-a-way so easily. The fair driver now, with great presence of mind, pulls with all her might on the line still remaining in her hand, whilst Number 8 is dragged along, almost a dead weight on the bridle. The trailing line unfortunately wraps around his limbs, and he falls. The wheel passes over the back of his head, but the line, securely wrapped around him, has stopped the team. The girl, now carefully holding her line firmly stretched, dismounts on the side on which her rescuer lies. The blood is flowing freely from his mouth and nose. All this the girl notices in an instant. She ties her team securely to a pine by the roadside. Then she takes Number 8's hat and brings it full of water from the stream nearly directly beneath the place where her rescuer fell. When she returns with the water he still lies in a dead faint. After she has washed the blood from his face he

begins to breathe, but does not open his eyes. What is she to do? To lift him into the wagon is impossible for her alone. She cannot let him lie there and go three miles for help, nor can she be sure that some one will come that way that night. In the midst of her dilemma she fortunately hears the approach of a horseman. When he comes around the bend in the road, she is rejoiced to see that it is one of her father's cowboys. Soon they have number 8 in the wagon, and the cow-boy, hitching his own horse to the rear of the wagon, takes the lines. The young lady supporting the head of Number 8 sits on the floor of the wagon, and thus they reach her home.

CHAPTER VII.

CONVALESCENT.

"Youth, hope, and love :
To build a new life on a ruined life,
To make the future fairer than the past,
And to make the past a troubled dream."

—*Longfellow.*

For three long weeks Number 8 lay in the stone house in front of which he had dismounted the night he escaped death. The day after the accident a doctor had been summoned from Colorado Springs. He made two visits without giving much hope for Number 8's recovery. When he called the third time, he found him in a raging fever. The doctor told the nurse that when the fever ceased the sufferer would either show signs of dissolution or he would recover. There could be no doubt of the doctor's predictions; but when the cow-boy who had helped to load Number 8 on the day of the accident, and who, together with the young lady whose life Number 8 had probably saved, was nursing him, inquired which of the doctor's predictions was likely to come true, he had shrugged his shoulders, and said something about membrane and nervous ganglia, which the cow-boy did not understand.

On his first visit Dr. Burns had not met Carrie Dives, for such was the girl's name. The second time she too had managed to see him, and had anxiously asked him about Number 8's condition. After that interview with Carrie, the doctor came every other day, explaining that the critical point in Number 8's case had come. He must attend the unknown young man, whether he could pay him or not. At each visit the doctor managed to see Carrie and to explain the case in detail to her.

The doctor scarcely knew why he made it a point to see Carrie every time he came to see the patient. When she was not in the room he would say to Jim, the cowboy, "Now if you will call the young lady I will give her my directions before I leave." On several occasions the nurse had told the doctor that inasmuch as he would be right in the room until the doctor would come again, he would carry out any directions he might wish to give. But no matter what Jim said, the doctor always found an excuse to see Carrie. Nor was this all, he would during Number 8's fever, make an excuse for prolonging his calls by saying he was trying a different medicine on the patient and must see how it acts. Then he would miss the morning train. This would give him an excuse to remain until late in the afternoon. Sometimes the doctor's patients in the city suffered because he stayed so long in the country. It must be confessed that this frequent and close attention on the part of Dr. Burns saved Number 8's life.

One day the doctor said to Carrie, "Miss Dives, I think you are paying rather dearly for your rescue. It must be a great trial to have one as sick as that young man, to think about and to look after."

"But doctor, do you not know that the great historian has said, 'gratitude is expensive?' Besides, I do not know but that if that young man had not risked his life I should have been sick much longer than he. If he will ever get so far as to speak coherently; I shall be more than paid for my anxiety." This had been said so sincerely by the young girl, that the doctor almost wished he were in the fever-ridden, unconscious and unknown young man's place. He had once asked Carrie whether she had ever seen the young man before he caught her run-away team. Truth to Carrie had always been a virtue so highly prized that, so far, she had never sacrificed it at any price. Nervously glancing at the doctor, then at Sambo, who stood by, and who she feared might know as much about the identity of their patient as she herself, she replied that she felt almost certain that at one time she had seen this same young man on the ranch. She might be mistaken, but she felt almost sure that she had seen him. She did not know where he was going or whence he had come the day of the accident.

Whenever the doctor thought of the noble self-sacrifice of the young man, hovering between life and death in the stone house, he would ask himself whether he would have been noble and brave enough to have done as this young man had done. He would

reply to his own question, by saying, a man will do a great deal on the spur of the moment, especially for so sweet a girl as Carrie Dives. But the man did not know Carrie, had not even time to see her face, before he lay almost lifeless beneath the wagon. Oh well, if this young man had risked his life, it was characteristic of fools to "rush in where angels fear to tread."

He was impressed with the fact that this young man's strength held out well. It was a proof that he had not led a life of dissipation. Only a good constitution could bear such a strain. Would the change never come? Would not the weakness, which was sure to be terrible, not be beyond all that medical skill could do to aid nature?

At last Number 8's fever left him. The first conscious sentence he spoke was to ask whether the young lady was safe. This greatly pleased Carrie, and caused the big tears to trickle down her cheeks. Carrie Dives was a pretty girl, of medium height. She was a brunette. Her hair was black. Her plump cheeks always had a delicate little blush nestled amid the brown. Her eyes were not black nor brown, as one would expect from her complexion, but blue as the fields of space far above the mountain peaks of her Colorado home, and bright as the stars which gemmed those fields at night. Her whole soul seemed to crowd into her eyes in order to study and learn the world around her. They seemed to look straight into every soul they met. No wonder that the girl insisted that Number 8 should be placed into her own room, where

the morning sunlight kissed the walls and floors. No wonder Dr. Burns, after meeting Carrie, felt that Number 8 needed a visit every other day.

When Number 8 had sufficiently convalesced to sit on the veranda, he knew that Carrie Dives was the identical girl who had revoked the sentence of death passed upon him by the cow-boys. He wondered whether she knew it. One day he said to her: "Did you, several months ago, late at night, help a man to escape from the clutches of some herders not far from here?"

The girl said: "I did, and you are the man. I remembered the color of your hair, and that hand with the little finger gone."

Number 8 asked: "How in the world did you get there at that hour and just when I needed you?"

She replied: "You need not tell me how you got there. Sambo and I were out hunting flowers. I watched you from the glen with my glass. I saw you steal that bread, and afterward throw away the baking powder. I knew you were hungry, and I pitied you. When you met Jim's horse (Jim is the cow-boy to whom we are already introduced as nurse of Number 8) I did not blame you, for I knew you were very tired. When you lay down at the creek I knew you did not mean to steal the horse. I had ridden only a few hundred yards away from you into the brush, when Pete and the Spaniard so rudely roused you. You must not blame them for deciding to hang you. They had that very morning reported six of the very

best horses stolen, among them Jim's 'old reliable.' I knew you were not one of the thieves. Sambo and I did not go home that evening until I could see that they did not intend to hurt you. When I came home I told papa what I had seen and heard, and told him he must let me rescue you. He gave his consent, but insisted on going along and remaining close enough to help me in case I needed him. You know the rest."

"Well," said Number 8, "you are a heroine. You saved my life."

"And you mine," she replied, "only it cost you more to do it, so we are not quite even. If you need a job, my father says he can give you one. He needs true, brave men."

During the remaining few weeks of Number 8's convalescence, Carrie and he became better acquainted. One day she said: "Father, I know what that young man can do. He can take the place of your drunken and thieving old book-keeper. He writes a good hand, and he says he understands single and double entry. He needs out-door exercise, and with you he can have it; because book-keeping with you involves outdoor life." (Number 8 had studied book-keeping in a night school in Chicago a few years before, and he now felt glad that he had.)

At the last visit Dr. Burns had strongly advised Number 8 to leave, because in his weakened condition the air was too rare at that high altitude. Number 8 knew why the advice was given, and did not follow it.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAD MEMORIES AND BLESSED COMFORTS.

“ There is none,
In all this cold and hollow world, no fount
Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within
A mother's heart.”—*Mrs. Hemans.*

Eight years have passed since Nick Nieman left his grand-father's home in the “Keystone State.” Six years ago his mother attended his supposed funeral, and returned to her home with the lines of care a little deeper, and her heart heavier than when she went in quest of her boy. Mrs. Nieman had not forgotten her boy, although as time wore on she felt more and more that she had been to his funeral. Washington Irving has well said: “The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other wound we seek to heal, every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open, this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude.” As time passes, it brings solace even to the heart that sorrows for the dead. Comfort had come to Mrs. Nieman's heart through the blessed family-life into which she had entered. Lee Nieman, the village doctor, had married the intelligent and warm-hearted daughter of a farmer, and had long since taken his mother to his own home. Mrs. Nieman had

found in Lee's wife more than she had ever lost in her own daughter, Liza. This new daughter having lost her own mother in early childhood, knew very little of a mother's love before she met Mrs. Nieman, in Lee's home. She therefore loved Mrs. Nieman tenderly. Nothing was too good for "Mother Nieman," as Lee's wife fondly called her. The sunniest bed-room, the cosiest corner by the fire in winter, the coolest bower in summer, the best of everything in the Nieman home was always reserved for "Mother Nieman."

What made this life more blessed to the elder Mrs. Nieman was the fact that she was permitted to spend her declining years in the very home in which she had given birth to all of her children, and where, during the first five years of her married life, she had had a veritable Eden.

It is true, the latter part of her married life had brought her much sorrow. She recalled very vividly how the doctor in this home had gradually but surely become the slave of his habit. She remembered how his face had become more drawn and his eyes more bloodshot, as he came out of one debauch only to enter helplessly and hopelessly into a deeper one. She remembered how at such times he would be harsh, even cruel to her, when she tried to warn him against his fate. Perhaps, after all, it had been a kindness to him, that Providence, in so mysterious and unexpected a way, had permitted him to be taken away out of the power of temptation. One blessed comfort she had, and that was that the doctor, a few weeks before he

died, had made one more effort to reform, and had asked her to do all in her power to help him.

No sorrow that Mrs. Nieman knew or had known, was keener in her heart than the one caused by the consciousness of the fact that her own daughter was too proud to love her. What though her tongue were too heavy to lisp and mince as her daughter had learned to do! What though her hands were not as soft, and her fingers as long and tapering as her daughter's! Had not those hands supported her child? Had not those fingers made many weary stitches when others slept, in order that her little girl might look as neat and sweet as any? When little Eliza had been sick, had she not watched with her in earnest solicitude? It made her heart bleed to think that in all these years since her daughter had left her home, she had heard from her only twice. Once when she graduated, she had sent an invitation and program after the exercises were over, lest she, the mother, and her son, the doctor, should come.

As she nursed the little girl which had come to Lee's home, the thought of her own daughter's ingratitude would come to her again and again. When she looked at the little face sweetly nestled on her bosom, she wondered whether that child-heart could ever become so hard and cold. Then she would pray to die ere it would come to pass. "No wonder," said she when speaking to Lee's wife on the subject, "that God has said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy

God giveth thee.' '' Mrs. Nieman had in Lee a continual comfort and solace. When his professional calls were over he would join her and his wife and discuss the work and the little plans for their comfort and happiness. When the weakness resulting from the weight of years, began to manifest itself in his mother, the tender solicitude, more than the medicine prescribed, helped her to regain health and vigor. Often the hard, drawn face would relax in smiles, and tears would course down the cheeks after one of the tender embraces of her son.

Lee Nieman was a born physican. When he was a child he loved to play doctor with his companions. When he became a teacher in the public school, he had a remedy for every sickness that manifested itself among his pupils, so that the mothers of the children consulted him more frequently than their family physicians. It was therefore natural for him to study medicine and become a physician at his earliest opportunity. Though he was contented to live in his paternal village, his reputation had extended beyond his home. Often he stood in counsel with the ablest physicians of neighboring cities.

Of course the doctor prospered. The paternal home was his own. The farm adjacent had been purchased and paid for several years before. His bank account was always on the sunny side; yet Lee Nieman for the last few years, had given in charity more than he saved. A mortgage of several hundred dollars resting on the home of a poor widow, had been lifted with his money.

and the fact made known to no one save the widow and the Nieman family.

Once the world called him a hero. There was a fire. The flames were licking up the home of a neighbor, and strongest men were afraid to enter the building in order to rescue the invalid father. When Lee Nieman arrived and realized that there was a man in the burning building he had pushed aside the crowd, and had run up the burning stairs. He had lowered the invalid by means of a rope, but before he could descend by the same rope, he had burned his hands severely, and singed his hair. He had not inhaled the flames. Thus it was that in a few days he was able to attend to his business as before. That was not the only time Lee Nieman was a hero. He had been declared the hero again and again by Him whose judgment never erreth, when he had stood by the bed-side of those afflicted with contagious diseases, and when he knew they had no reward to give him. Where duty called, Dr. Nieman always went by night and by day, in sunshine and in storm. No wonder his mother's eyes brightened whenever he appeared; no wonder his wife loved him with all the tenderness and strength of a true woman's heart. Yes, Lee Nieman was happy. We do not mean that he had no cares, no worries.

"In every life some rain must fall,
Some days be dark and dreary,"

and so doctor Nieman's life had its dark days; but he

was happy as the lot of a mortal freest from care, is happy.

One day just before Octavia Nieman had received a letter from Mr. Baer, the administrator of the True estate, Lee Nieman had also gotten a letter from the same man, in which the administrator inquired as to the whereabouts of Miss Eliza Nieman. In this letter he told the doctor that a fortune was awaiting his sister. Lee had frankly told him of his sister's fondness of being called "Octavia Newman" instead of by her real name. He assured Mr. Baer that he would be able to prove that what he said was the exact truth. When on writing to Miss Nieman, he would receive a reply from one signing herself, "Miss Octavia Newman, M. D.," he was to feel assured that he was writing to the person intended by the will. He also told him that by writing to New York city, in care of the hospital on Blackwells Island, he would reach her soonest. Then Lee also wrote to the hospital, instructing them there to forward any letter addressed to Miss Eliza Nieman, to Miss Octavia. The real truth is therefore, that doctor Nieman knew of his sister's good fortune, some weeks before she herself found it out. Furthermore, he had already prepared the way for her to receive it when she was debating whether to take him into her confidence or not. Lee had told his own mother all about it, but no one else. "I fear," he had said to his mother, "sister's fortune will do her but little good. As the clown shakes his head to hear his bells jingle and attract at-

tention only to be laughed at, so a few added guineas will cause sister's head to toss still more. I fear it will make her lose her balance."

Lee Nieman might have offered his sister his services, but he thought it best not to interfere. He knew his sister would measure him by her own short and warped little rule, and not only not give him credit for noble and unselfish motives, but would actually be suspicious of him. Suspicion always haunts the guilty. He knew how selfish and proud she was, so he left her to her own resources.

CHAPTER IX.

“ DISSOLVED PARTNERSHIP.”

“ Oh heaven, that such companions thou’ldst unfold
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from east to west.”—*Shakespeare*.

The day after Mr. Sharp left Los Angeles two of the daily papers contained the following notice: “ Dissolved Partnership.—The Law and Real Estate firm of Sharp and Ketchem has dissolved partnership. All persons indebted to the firm will hereafter make payments to Mr. W. W. Ketchem, Number — S. Broadway.”

Messrs Sharp and Ketchem had done a thriving business for several years as real estate agents. During the boom they had made money by investing the capital of eastern purchasers, and then after the boom the law firm had made big money in foreclosing the mortgages held against these same eastern purchasers. In every case Sharp and Ketchem had made money, and in nearly every case their patrons lost. Widows allured by the flashing advertisements of what had been done and was then being done by persons of small means, “ in this Eldorado,” had invested in lots, and after the boom they offered these same lots for just one tenth of what they had paid for them “ spot cash.”

This same Sharp and Ketchem had bought out-of-town tracts and laid out towns on paper and had sent their advertisements all over the land. Thus they succeeded in laying out their customers as well as their land. To-day the unfinished foundations of hotels stand like traps in and out of the city, showing how the "gullible" were caught. Some hotels in these towns and cities to be, were finished, and to day they stand with windows mashed, doors nailed up, and chimneys fallen, fit emblems of the air castles the investors had built in and around "this valuable property."

Because Sharp and Ketchem had been "successful in business," the latter had a fine suburban home, and drove to his place of business every morning in a splendid turn-out. Mr. Sharp, after leaving his wife and child, had boarded at the best hotel in the city, and had played poker until much of his gain had "gang a glee." He had met the Dives in "fashionable society," but they, along with their money, had inherited good common sense. They had weighed Mr. sharp in their balances, and he had gone up like a feather in a breeze. He realized this very soon. During the encampment in the Sierras, which he had been able to join by his strategy with the cousin of the Dives, he had utterly failed to "make an impression" upon any one of the party except "Miss Octavia Newman, M. D.," as she always signed herself on the hotel registers. The Dives could not understand why Mr. Sharp boarded the train that

morning. One of them had made herself bold enough to ask his destination. He had told her that an unforeseen circumstance had brought him the good fortune of a journey of at least a part of the way with them.

During the journey Mr. Sharp had courted Octavia assiduously, although he was still the lawful husband of another woman. Of course Octavia did not look upon Mr. Sharp's attentions as anything more than an effort to be agreeable to her. He took pains to tell her how in his giddy youth he had become entrapped in the meshes of matrimony with a woman, heartless and brainless, and how, finally, he having proof of her infidelity, was about to apply for a divorce. His entire being, he added, rebelled against the thought of a divorce, but he could do nothing else. This family history of Mr. Sharp's will be exactly true, as we shall presently see, if the reader substitutes the feminine for the masculine personal pronoun. He told Octavia how he could still love a true woman. In fact the sad experiences of the past years had made him yearn for the love of a true woman. In short Mr. Sharp talked like a philosopher, and assumed the role of a perfect saint. There was but one thing which kept Octavia from casting herself at the feet of this truly bad man. It was not her good sense, for she had little of that. It was her pride. She was willing to wed a rich man, a smart man, a lawyer; but she was not yet ready to wed a man already married.

The business which had so recently been thrust upon Octavia, she flattered herself, did not require a husband, or a lover even; a smart lawyer like Mr. Sharp could attend to that for her, and she could then be mistress of her own possessions. But why not let the man woo her? It was so delightful to have a man at her feet, as she imagined Mr. Sharp really was. She would tell him all after he would declare his inmost soul as a lover. That would prepare him all the more to attend faithfully to her business. In short, Octavia wished to hear the words so sweet to every woman's ears, that the man loved her. She little dreamt that when she let the letter lie on the table in the parlor, the day she received it, and had gone out for a few moments, when Mr. Sharp was announced, he had actually picked up the letter and hastily read it before her return. That was the reason he unburdened his soul so frankly to Miss Octavia, on the way to New York City. That was not the reason, however, that he left the city of Los Angeles that morning.

At Kansas City a telegram had been handed him, and Octavia, who stood at his side, noticed the change which came over his face as he read it, and wondered what made him so nervous. He explained by saying that a friend of his needed his legal advice in New York and that he must now accompany them on their journey to that city. Miss Octavia noticed that Mr. Sharp from the time he received the telegram was entirely different from what he had been before. He

would try to appear pleasant and cheerful; but every time their train stopped he nervously glided from one end of the car to the other, and avoided every new comer, when that new comer happened to be a man. Octavia remembered all this very distinctly afterward, although at the time it made no decided impression on her. She had been too supremely happy at her good fortune in receiving the letter from Omaha, and in having the company of so estimable a gentleman as Mr. Sharp. When Mr. Sharp left her for the smoking-room or to examine his telegram, which he of course did not show Miss Octavia, she thought with pleasure on the fact that "her ship had at length come in," and was so well laden.

The Dives knew that Mr. Sharp was a married man. They knew too that their cousin, who had given them the information, rather palliated his baseness, as women are so apt to do when they are judging a man's conduct towards a woman. They were sorry he was accompanying them in this journey. They had a strange foreboding that all was not right before he received the telegram. They noticed the strange demeanor of the man after he had received the dispatch, and asked him whether he had received bad news, or whether he were sick. To each and all of their questions he had simply replied: "Ladies, I do not know why you should think so." Absolutely nothing had happened, but to the Dives it was evident that something very serious had happened, if they

could judge from his demeanor. Finally they plainly and bluntly told Octavia that they believed Mr. Sharp entirely unworthy of her society, and counseled her to "cut" him at her earliest opportunity.

Miss Newman replied to this advice with a curl on her lip, that the Dives knew that she had not only taken care of herself, but of others as well, and that it required a strong and well-balanced mind to read and appreciate Mr. Sharp. After this the Dives said nothing, but they thought a great deal. Miss Newman had been a faithful medical nurse during their illness, and on this trip she had chaperoned them, and they would now, as they had frequently done before, excuse her independence, and even impudence. It was evident to them, and they could not see why it should not be just as plain to her, that if Mr. Sharp were on business of an ordinary character, he would not act as he did, and show such restlessness and suspicion. If it were true, as he had told Miss Newman, that the Los Angeles court had adjourned for the summer, it was evident that Mr. Sharp's conscience had recently received so much business that it could not adjourn. Fear had evidently constrained it to open a very busy session. Of course Miss Newman was her own mistress, and could do as she pleased; but it seemed so strange to them that she should be so willing to "lower her dignity," upon which she always prided herself heretofore, to such a degree as actually to fall in love with a grass-widower; for it was evident to them that that was the exact state of Miss Newman

at that very moment. It was another example of how "the chemist of love" had transmuted the perishable and very coarse clay into gold. Perhaps after all she would cast the man from her as a viper. They hoped it might be so ere he had infused beyond remedy, his poison into her being. Of course a woman always feels herself complimented by being loved, even when love is offered by a man beneath her in every respect, and consequently unfit to merit her love in return. Let Miss Newman enjoy the compliment Sharp was trying to bestow upon her; but it was a question whether he was actually in love, or whether he was not actuated by other motives than those of the holy passion, to gain the nurse's affection.

Perhaps Miss Octavia was so blind to Mr. Sharp's faults because she felt that her chances were diminishing. She had often said that she never intended to be an old maid. She would rather marry a man and support him than to have no one to love her. Octavia had a heart, but her pride and vanity had turned it into something akin to stone. Perhaps if this unfortunate softening of her soul into an unrighteous love would bring her bitterness, this very bitterness would spin the golden threads of a more comely and more becoming robe than the nurse usually wore in their daily experience with her. They believed that a bitter sorrow would crush her pride, and melt her being into its true womanly tenderness, which they felt must lie buried in her soul somewhere.

CHAPTER X.

BRAVERY BEGETS CONFIDENCE.

“ Every mission constitutes a pledge of duty. Every man is bound to consecrate his every faculty to its fulfillment. He will derive his rule of action from the profound conviction of that duty.”—*Mazzini*.

With Mr. Dives a book-keeper had many and varied duties. Not only was he expected to keep a correct account of the receipts and expenditures of Mr. Dives' cattle business; but he was often compelled to look after the details of the business. Mr. Dives made it a point to see that his men were supplied with good, wholesome fare, and consequently delivered it to them at actual cost. He paid them a fixed salary; but insisted on supplying them with the necessaries of life. There were no periodical sprees among his men, inaugurated apparently when they went to buy food. All goods delivered them was always accompanied with an itemized bill. The herders in turn were responsible for the cattle in their charge. The stock was inspected once every month. This required a few days; but it was time well spent. If any of the stock were missing, the herders were compelled to account for it. If they could show that the loss was due to disease, or was lost in any way for which they could not be held responsible, the loss was not charged to them.

Just before the time the book-keeper then known as Number 8 had visited the shanty and helped himself to bread, a number of horses had been stolen, and Mr. Dives suspected that the cow-boys had themselves something to do with the theft. In view of this suspicion he had said that for every horse stolen he expected an adequate return. This was the reason the herders were so anxious to make an example of the thief, provided they caught him. Number 8 had been the first one upon whom they had riveted their suspicion. He had been unable to clear himself, and would doubtless have been hung, had it not been for Carrie's timely interposition.

Of course Carrie Dives never gave away the secret of Number 8's deliverance. The cow-boys themselves considered the escape little short of miraculous, and felt sure that the fellow had had accomplices. They did not suspect that the well-dressed, smoothly-shaven young man, who, in company with Mr. Dives, visited them once every month, who helped to look the cattle over, and who noted their orders for the month's supplies, was the same heavy-bearded, rough-looking Number 8, whom they had once condemned to be hung. They felt sure they had made no mistake. Since the suspect had escaped, they had had rest. He had evidently told his companions that they meant business.

Every sixteenth of the month the book-keeper would write receipts for the men of the amounts due them, then they would step to the desk and sign these

receipts, in the office in the home of the Dives. After they were signed Mr. Dives would cash them. Mr. Dives kept a safe in his office. This little office was a room by itself, communicating with the book-keeper's room, to which all had access through an opening about a foot square. The only means of ingress into this private office was through a door which communicated with Mr. Dives' bed-room, and a window heavily grated.

Mr. Dives would draw his money in the bank at Denver and have it sent by express to the little station with which our readers are already familiar. Here he and the book-keeper would be in waiting with the mustangs and the spring-wagon, with which our friend became so intimately associated on his first return to the little station. The money would soon be transported from the train to the safe in the private office.

This had been done ever since Mr. Dives had gone into the cattle business. He had never been molested, partly because few knew of his business methods, and partly because no one suspected that these money shipments amounted to over a few hundred dollars. When he sold cattle the money was always deposited directly in the Denver bank. The cow-boys themselves did not know when, or how he received his money. For all they knew, it might have grown in Mr. Dives' cellar under the stone house. In some way, somebody found out that Mr. Dives brought considerable sums of money to his safe by means of his mustang team. Carrie always said that it was known

only to the thievish and drunken predecessor in the office now so well filled by Number 8. She scarcely knew why she called the former book-keeper a thief. She had missed a gold ring, it is true, whilst he was in their employ; but someone else might have taken it.

One evening in November Mr. Dives, the book-keeper and Sambo had been to the station and had received some groceries and general produce, and \$1,500 in coin. The coin was placed into little sacks in Denver. The silver was in a sack much larger than the rest. These sacks had been placed in a basket at the station, and some powder and shot and other things piled on top of them.

As the three were driving along the narrow road where Number 8 had stopped Carrie's run-a-way, Mr. Dives began talking about the narrow escape the book-keeper and his daughter had had several months before. Among other things he had just said, "hope nothing of the kind will ever occur again." It was already dusk. On the one side of the road, the reader will remember, the hill rose almost perpendicularly; on the other there was a bank several feet high, which, in turn, terminated in an almost precipitous declivity over a hundred feet high.

Mr. Dives had hardly expressed his hope for the safety of travelers in general and his own in particular, when the mustangs reared and sprang to a side. At the same instant, two men rising apparently out of the ground, had clutched the reins of the ponies. For a moment Mr. Dives, who was driving, thought that

the men, having been sitting on the bank, had unexpectedly frightened the team, and realizing that they were endangering the lives of the persons in the wagon, had tried to undo the mischief by clutching the reins and holding the horses until they could be quieted. His mind was, however, soon disabused when he saw another with a revolver in his hand, jumping into the wagon back of them. At the same time the man holding the horse on the right, shouted, "Do not turn your heads or in any way move yourselves, or we will put daylight through you." The man on the wagon said to Sambo, who was squatted on the floor of the wagon, "You nigger, hand me that money." Sambo handed the robber the little bag on top of the basket. The robber clutched it eagerly, but the moment he touched it he felt the shot; hurling it into the road with an oath, he said: "No more fooling. Hand the money, I say." "I's got no money," said Sambo. Then there was a dull thud. Mr. Dives and the book-keeper knew what had happened, although Sambo gave no sound. Quick as thought Number 8 had turned and struck the robber, who for the moment was off his guard, a stinging blow on the arm with which he had dealt Sambo the blow, with the butt of the pistol. The revolver fell and was discharged into the opposite bank, just about the same time that a shot whistled past Number 8's ear. The mustangs, being frightened by the shot, reared, plunged forward, and threw the men who had held them to the ground. Mr. Dives shouted to the horses,

and in a moment the wheels had gone over the fellows on the road in front of the wagon, whilst the ruffian who had gone head over heels into the road from the rear of the wagon, was running on behind and discharging his revolver wildly into the air.

Firm strength guided the team on the mountain road, and in a moment the wagon had borne coin, occupants and all, far away from the high-way-men. In an hour afterward the coin was in the safe in the private office, and Miss Carrie was washing the blood off poor Sambo's head. The wound was merely a gash on his hard head, and soon healed.

Of course I need not tell you that this second display of valor on the part of Number 8 had its effect upon Mr. Dives as well as Carrie. A few days after the affair just mentioned, Mr. Dives had said to Carrie, referring to the agility of the book-keeper's movement, and his indifference to the fellows who held pistols in front of the wagon, "To tell you the truth, Carrie, I consider the book-keeper one of the most reliable and cool-headed men I ever saw. He is always the same, no matter in what position he is placed." (Had Mr. Dives seen our friend when he was arrested for a horse-thief he would have known of one time when Number 8 had lost his presence of mind.) "I have a big job on hand for him now. I am going to send him to Santa Fe in a few weeks, to buy some burros from the Pueblo Indians. I think he knows a good beast when he sees it just about as well as any herder on the place. A car load or two will readily sell

among the miners here, and net a good profit. He says the trip will suit him exactly. He has an uncle in Santa Fe and several cousins. He met one of them in Denver a few years ago. This will enable him to make good his promise to call and see them."

"When are you going to send him?" said Carrie.

"I thought I could spare him at the beginning of next week as well as any time. The heaviest work for the month is all done."

"I am sorry for that," said Carrie, "because I received a letter from Denver to-day, from Dr. Burns, in which he says he will come and spend a few days with us if it is agreeable. I so much wish that my hero, as I call him, could be here then."

"Whatever you may wish," said Mr. Dives, "Dr. Burns will wish your hero, as you call him, anywhere but here, when he comes. Besides, the arrangements for our friend to go are all made. I guess you will be able to take care of the doctor yourself, will you not?"

"I can certainly take care of the doctor, and fortunately for me and my hero, it is none of the doctor's business who is here when he comes. But it is nearly eleven o'clock and time to retire. Papa, do reconsider sending my hero away next week. I shall be really disappointed if he goes."

"Never mind, little one," said the old gentleman, "the doctor will be so glad to find you all alone. It will give him a chance to practice target shooting. The last time his aim was so bad that even Sambo said, 'this fool nigger can shoot better than Massa Doctor.' But as you say, it is time to retire. Good night, my dear girl."

CHAPTER XI.

SHE LOVED WELL, BUT NOT WISELY.

“ Of the book of books most wonderous,
Is the tender one of love,
With attention may I read;
Few of pages joyful—
Of the sections one is parting,—
Meet again:—a little chapter,
Fragmentary.—Of Afflictions
Volumes lengthened by interpellations,
Endless without goal.” — *Goethe*.

We have already said too much of Mr. Sharp's family matters, not to give a detailed account of how he wooed and lost pretty Minnie G. of Los Angeles. Minnie was a mere girl in appearance as well as age, when Sharp led her to the marriage altar. She had come from a poor family, but she had been brought up in the paths of virtue, and had been taught many of those little arts so peculiar to her sex—the arts that embellish the humblest home, and give it an air of comfort and repose which often the gayest palace lacks. She had learned to sew and help her mother in her dress-making several years before Sharp had entered their home, and had poisoned the fountains of their domestic happiness. Sharp was then already in the real-estate business. He had begun life as a clerk in a dry-goods store, which he had entered soon after graduating from the high school. It was whilst

he was behind the counter selling dress-goods, that he first met pretty Minnie G. in company with her mother. Minnie was a perfect blonde, keeping a complexion as fair as a pictured mermaid's, although she was out in the hot California sun every day. Her eyes were clear and pretty as the azure of the skies. "Her sunny locks hung on her temples like a golden fleece."

Sharp was not the only person in that store that was ensnared by the quiet, unassuming beauty of this girl; but being a little bolder than the rest, he made it his business to become acquainted after the first call of the young girl at the store. The permission to call at her home was asked of her mother. She was at first favorably impressed with the young man, partly because he seemed so frank in all his demeanor toward her. But Sharp was one of those cunning men, who, like serpents slowly coiling around the limb upon which is situated the nest of the bird, do not strike until their heads tower over the little creatures' home, and see all that it contains. He, unlike the serpent, had the ability to conceal his snaky nature until he had his prey in his power.

Minnie's mother was a widow. Her father had died several years before Mr. Sharp met the widow and her daughter. He had been an honest and industrious mechanic, and had left Minnie and her mother a neat, comfortable home on — Avenue. The mother and her daughter had not only kept out of debt, but had been able to lay a little by from the pro-

ceeds of their work as seamstresses. Minnie had bought a piano, and had become a proficient performer, before she sang love ditties for Sharp.

Sharp at first called only once a week at Minnie's home, because he knew that he was not welcome to call oftener, at least with the young lady's mother. He took Minnie out to the theatre and other places of amusement as often as his means permitted him. He always tried to make the impression that he had plenty of money; but those who knew him best also knew that his funds were limited. Before Minnie's mother was aware of it the young people were engaged. To most mothers the news that a daughter is engaged is unwelcome. Especially is this the case when the daughter is an only daughter, an only child, as in this instance. When Minnie communicated this news to her mother, the elder lady laid by her work and for several moments simply stared at her daughter. Finally she said, "Minnie, I can scarcely believe that you, only eighteen, should engage yourself to a man who is not only five or six years older, but concerning whom you know as little as we know of Mr. Sharp. Seven months ago he was an utter stranger. To-day he is little more. Why did you at least not honor your mother enough to consult her on so important a subject? You know that Mr. Sharp comes from San Diego. You know that he is a clerk in — store. What else do you know? Nothing; yes, you do know that he does not get wages enough to support a wife. Minnie, I thought that you would have better sense."

"Mamma," said the girl, "I love Mr. Sharp. He has always treated me well. He asked me to marry him, and I promised, because I love him. If you did not wish me to fall in love with Mr. Sharp, why did you permit him to come to see me for half a year, without telling him so?"

Minnie was right. Her mother had made a mistake in allowing Sharp to make regular and frequent calls on her daughter, when she knew that her daughter was too young to marry, and Mr. Sharp had not sufficient salary to support a wife respectably. Minnie's mother made the same mistake that thousands of mothers have made and are making.

When Sharp called that evening, Minnie's mother made it a point to come to the door. She ushered him into the parlor; then, without further ado, she said, "Minnie has told me of your engagement. Mr. Sharp, why did you not ask me for my daughter's hand? Am I not her mother, her dearest and best friend she has on earth?"

Sharp was taken by surprise. If he would have told her the truth, he would have said, "The very reason I did not ask you for your daughter is because I know you to be her best friend. I have asked your daughter to be my wife largely for convenience sake. I think I love her, at least enough to live with her for a while." But Mr. Sharp was too wise to speak the very thoughts he had had on that subject, so he said: "Minnie has consented to be my wife, and I have promised to make her a good husband. We really did

not think of asking your consent. We thought you would not object; because you never objected to my coming here."

"And how do you expect to support your wife? You know, Mr. Sharp, you are getting a small salary."

"Minnie said she would stay with you a year or two after our marriage. I am leaving the store and am going into the real-estate business with Mr. Ketchum. I will read law with him, and do most of his real-estate business, and get a salary from the start. In a few years I will enter the bar, and my living will be assured."

"Those plans are all very good," said Minnie's mother, "but are you sure you can carry them out? Would it not be better to marry after your business is well established?"

Mr. Sharp consented to any and all propositions that Minnie's mother made that evening. He thought that he was master of the situation, and he could modify the mother's plans to suit himself. He did modify them afterwards, but not exactly to suit himself. As soon as he found that even an engagement did not make him master of the pretty Minnie, he proposed that they get married at once. This was two weeks after their engagement. Minnie said she would consult her mother. Sharp told her he knew her mother's answer in advance. "Then," said she, "we will wait. Mother knows best."

"We will not wait," was his hasty reply. "Did

you not promise to marry me? Do you not love me better than any one in all the world?"

"Yes, Harry, I love you, and I will marry you; but you know you promised mother to wait."

For more than a month Sharp argued, plead with Minnie to marry him at once. Finally the girl told him she had consulted her mother, and she positively forbade it, for a year to come. By that time he would be better established in his business, and they would be happier when there was no danger of the wolf entering the door, so that love would fly out of the window. Sharp that evening had come prepared to gain Minnie's consent to an immediate marriage. Reaching into his pocket he drew forth a roll of bills, and counted them before Minnie's astonished gaze. There were two-hundred dollars, which to the girl seemed a big sum, especially when she learned that Mr. Sharp had made all that money that very day. He said he had prospects of making twice that sum to-morrow. He knew that no later than ten and a half o'clock the shrill treble of his prospective mother-in-law would ring out the words, "Minnie, come to your room." At nine o'clock that evening Sharp asked Minnie to take a walk. He wished to walk, because he was going to insist on an elopement, provided Minnie would not assure him that her mother would swerve from her resolution of making the young people wait. Minnie assured him in that walk that her mother would not change her mind. "Then," said Sharp, "we marry next week."

"How can we," said the startled girl.

"By going to San Diego. We can get a license there, and be married before your mother knows it. We will come home and surprise her."

"Say rather we will come home and she will surprise us by not letting us into her house. I know my mother. She is a good, dear mother, but she has a mind of her own."

"In that respect you are like her, Minnie. You must choose between your mother and me this very evening. Next week or never. If you love me you will consent to my wishes. I will take care of you."

Finally Minnie begged for a day's consideration. Sharp hesitated. He asked himself whether he had not come to settle the matter of their marriage at once. Coldly and heartlessly he asked himself whether he would cast her off then and there, but unfortunately for Minnie, he decided he would not. Looking at his watch, he found that it lacked only a quarter to ten, and knowing that Minnie's mother had not been told of their going away, he said, "All right, dear, I will see you to-morrow evening." He kissed her good-night and was gone.

That night and all next day Minnie had a sad heart. More than once her mother had asked her whether she was ill. If the girl would candidly and frankly have told her mother the cause of her disquietude, she might have been saved. Before the sun had set, Minnie had made up her mind to elope with her lover. When he came, she would tell him so.

Mr. Sharp came earlier than usual that evening, and together the two laid their plans. We will not dwell on their conversation, but we will simply add that they planned away their happiness. They resolved to enter upon a course of deception and wrong-doing which for both of them was simply fearful in its results. "Never yet were the feelings and instincts of our nature violated with impunity; never yet was the voice of conscience silenced without retribution."

The day before the time Minnie was to take the train for San Diego, her mother said to her, "Minnie, you are no longer the girl you used to be. You are so quiet, so sad. You are getting thinner every day. You are only a shadow of your former self. I don't hear you sing any more. Your piano has not been touched for a week. When your lover comes you either go out walking, or you sit together, whispering. I believe it would be much better for you, child, if you would tell that man to go about his business. I like him less the longer I know him. I was told by Mrs. B. only the other day that she saw him in a buggy with another young lady, and that she heard it said that he frequented questionable places. Minnie, it would be a thousand times better for you and me both if you would break your engagement."

As Pilate was warned by his wife before he passed the sentence of death upon the innocent Christ, as was the great Cæsar warned before he went to his death, so the mother of Minnie warned her, before she took the step which in the end proved as fatal to her

earthly happiness as death itself could have been. In answer to her mother's warning, Minnie burst into a flood of tears and left the room.

When alone she argued that she knew Mr. Sharp better than either her neighbor or her mother. A real-estate agent would be likely to have ladies riding with him occasionally. He himself had told her that he had only a few days before taken some ladies to see some lots and had made "a good deal." She did not exactly know what that was, but she knew it could not mean anything very dreadful. When people got married everybody spoke badly of them. That was the reason she was compelled to hear all this of her lover. She would be true to him. Poor girl, had she only known it, her being true to him made her untrue to herself and him as well. The next day she put on her best and went "down-town," as she said to her mother.

CHAPTER XII.

BURROS AND PUEBLOS.

“ Lo: the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind,
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky-way.”—*Pope*.

Will the reader kindly accompany us with Carrie's hero to the quaint old town of Santa Fe? We will visit with him at his cousin's, in the place where two civilizations have met, a place where the low adobe buildings look up to the high walls of the more modern dwellings, like weazen-visaged old Mexican mothers sit and look up to their stalwart, sombreroed sons. Everybody in the old city knows the pretty park in which the military band discourses sweet music to the virtuous and the vicious, to the lover and his lady, who lounge on the seats, or stroll along the walks.

About three squares from this park, just on the other side of the bridge, there stands a frame house with a big porch fronting on the stream that at the wet season flows beneath the bridge. In this house, for a number of years already, a stout, good-natured woman and a weak, sickly-looking man have been keeping a boarding-house. They came from the Eastern States because of the man's health. They had

lived first in the "Empire State;" then they had gone to the "Keystone," and afterward to the "Old Dominion;" but all to no purpose. Each winter the man became a little weaker, or rather he did not gain as much when the next summer came as he had lost the previous winter. As a last resort they had come to New Mexico. Here the man had so far succeeded in keeping death at bay by the combined help of the dry climate, lotions and blisters, and tonics.

But it is neither in the man or woman that we are interested. These parents have three children, a son and two daughters. The children so far have never needed medicine to keep them well. For years already they have done more than the boarders to give their parents a good living. The son, now more than twenty-three years of age, has been working in the mines or on the railroad ever since he was fifteen years of age. He has come home frequently during this period. Sometimes he has come with his pockets well filled with the product of his toil. Other times he has come with little; but he has always received a good welcome, and has always brought a clear conscience with him, as well as a rousing good appetite.

Once this young man had been away for a whole year. He had spent his time during this year at work on the Denver and Rio Grande railway. He had met a friend in a hotel where they both were stopping. The meeting had been by the merest accident. Before the two friends had parted, they had promised to meet again in a year, and in the home of the invalid man

and his wife who keep the boarding-house. When the year was up the friend came. He found the house by the Arroyo, as the Spanish called the dry river-course in front of the house in Santa Fe; but the young man was away from home. The sisters and parents did not know where he was. He had started to Denver and had written to them from that city several times; but for six months already they had not heard a word. They said this, betraying not a little anxiety at the long continued silence of the boy who was dear to parents and sisters alike.

Of course the visitor had no trouble in making himself known. He was received with open hands and hearts. He was in fact the first that had come to the home in the ten years of their residence in the territory, who claimed to have the same blood in his veins with them. It was the first time the visitor had been in the territory. Everything was new to him. The Pueblo girls with their straight black hair and short skirts, and the queer brown black cloths which they had wrapped around their limbs to their knees was a source of endless amusement to the visitor. He had visited their villages in company with the two ladies, and being accompanied by females, he had been shown more favors than if he had come without them. He had learned much of the habits and ancient customs still prevalent among this queer and interesting people. But in all of Carrie Dives' hero's trips, for this is he who the visitor to the friends in Santa Fe is, nothing compares in interest with his visit to the Acoma

Pueblo. Inasmuch as this trip required two days and some "roughing it" the girls stayed at home, and their father accompanied him.

Not everybody knows that Acoma is on the top of a rock three hundred feet high. A brief description will be necessary in order that our readers may more fully enter into the experiences of the two men in this interesting trip. There are two ways of getting to the top of the rock. On the one side of this rock is a narrow fissure. Into it the Indians cut steps, first one on the one side, then one on the other, thus to the top. For at least two hundred years already they have walked these steps to and from their homes perched on the top of the rock. Once on the top of this mighty monumental rock, one brave could defend the village, or, rather, community against a host of foes, were it not for the fact that for the last one-hundred years nature has provided another means of ascent. This is in the shape of another fissure as it originally was, or cañon as it now is. This cañon is on the western side of the rock. During many decades already the wind has been drifting clean white sand into it, so that now there is a path-way white as pearl from the bottom to the very top. This path-way ascends at an angle of about sixty or seventy degrees. The path is widest at the base, being upward of fifty feet wide there. Over this path the burros are now led. The fathers of the present Acomas had no possible approach to their nest-like home with their faithful little mules. It may be that they hoisted them to the top in time of

war by some contrivance of which the present inhabitants know nothing.

These Indians have a tradition that before the white man visited America their fathers lived on another rock close by, and much higher than the one the people now occupy. In confirmation of their assertion they point to a great pile of rock at the base of this vast monumental pillar; and explain to the visitor that this is the remains of the colossal stair-way which once led to the top, and over which their great, great, great grand-fathers ascended to their home.

They explain that once when all the women and children, except three feeble old women, were at work in the fields, near the base of the rock, the Great Spirit sent a mighty earthquake, and rent the rocks and scattered the adamantine stair-way over the plain.

It was many months before a new ascent could be provided by the people at the base of the rock. When they finally did get up they found that the old women had perished for want of water or food or both. To this day on certain occasions, such as when a calamity is about to befall the tribe, they still hear the wail of the old ladies. However true or untrue this may be, the place as it now exists is well worthy of a visit.

Our friends spent the night on top of the rock in the home of the chief. They found him hospitable to a degree which they could not have credited before they actually experienced it. No doubt the gold pieces which Mr. Dives' book-keeper had paid the old chieftain the day before for thirty of the finest burros had

opened his heart. Whatever may be said with regard to the influence which the gold of the visitors had had in prompting to deeds of hospitality, these people are very much unlike their savage neighbors, the inhuman Apaches. The Pueblos seem to be the last remains of a people of a higher civilization than that which characterized the great bulk of American Indians at the time of the discovery of this Western World. The invalid from Santa Fe said to his companion, "I tell you, my young friend, I had no idea that I have been so near one of the oldest and most curious pages of ancient history as this which we have found written on the top of this rock. I am sorry that I did not bring the girls with us. The fatigue is nothing, whilst the comforts which these people offer their guests compare favorably with those which men who boast of a higher degree of civilization furnish their visitors." The book-keeper agreed with him. Not only was the visit unattended with the discomforts which they had imagined they would be sure to experience; but it had been delightfully instructive.

There was one person of whom our friend thought oftener and more intently than of the girls he had left in Santa Fe. That person was Miss Carrie Dives. He knew that she would have enjoyed the trip as much as any girl on the American continent. She was not afraid of a few hardships. The same out-door life which gave these Acoma girls their elasticity of movement and well rounded and developed forms, had also given Carrie wonderful strength for a girl

who had been so delicately reared until almost the period when girlhood is lost in fully developed womanhood. He could easily see how centuries of ancestral life similar to this the Pueblo girls were leading, should produce the long, straight, black locks, the round, chubby cheek, and the lithe limb. But, after all, there was something in ancestral stock, which preserved a form so distinct from that of the Apaches, who shared very much the same conditions of out-door life, and precisely the same conditions of climate.

The enjoyment of the scenes which his eyes were beholding, would have been keener had Carrie been with him, he admitted; but then, what was Carrie to him? What could she ever be to the man who was under obligations to her for saving his life twice. He had said to himself again and again, that if it had not been for her good nursing with which she had supplemented the doctor's oversight, and Jim's attention, he would never have gotten out of the bed in the sunny room in the stone house. What could she ever be to the him, but the daughter of his employer? She was pretty; he was not handsome. She was rich; he was poor. She had had the advantages of a liberal education in New York before she ever dreamt of coming to this western country; he had not thought of the advantages of learning until it was too late to lay thoroughly even the rudiments of a liberal education. No, he was not suited to Carrie Dives even if she could love him, and thus far he had not asked her; had not presumed so to do. He had no right to think

that she would ever love him. Why should she? No man in Colorado Springs would be able to resist her bewitching blue eyes and those rosy lips when they smiled their sweetest. He did admit that he enjoyed life in the new employment as he had never done before? Why was it? Not because it was easier; for it was not. The days were longer and often hands and brain were busy at one and the same time; yet, notwithstanding the fact that the hours of toil were longer, this new life wore a charm which no work or play had ever worn before. Sometimes the sun in the morning will illuminate the mountain peak with a silvery light which seems unearthly in its brightness to the traveler, who has set out to reach the top of that peak before the sun sinks into her burning bed in the west. He fancies that the rock, which glitters like burnished silver, cannot be the same material over which his feet stumble now, as he looks at the bright beauty and dazzling splendor far above him. When at last the traveler reaches the summit, foot-sore and weary, and now looks beneath him to the valley, clothed in the mellow twilight, and realizes that the rock, which was so beautiful when beheld in the charming light of a newly risen sun, is only common, cold, gray rock, he almost wishes that he had remained in the valley and had not made the toilsome journey to this, his goal. So Carrie's hero, when he had seen others engaged in the very work in which he was now engaged, whilst he then was snatching a few hours of instruction in the evening, had looked

upon their positions in life as something far superior to what he could attain; but now that he had obtained a position which those whom he once considered fortunate would have envied, he feared that he would in the end feel like the traveler who has gained the goal. He feared that this semi-conscious life which he was living must in the end awake in bitter disappointments and poignant sorrow. Then he would look back over his past life, which, though not so broad, so rich in opportunities, would be fertile in pictures which memory would bathe in glories unseen whilst the pictures had been a reality.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DIVORCE AND HOW IT WAS OBTAINED.

“ He counsels a divorce: a loss of her,
That, like a jewel, has hung twenty years
About his neck, yet never lost her lustre;
And she a fair divided
Of her that loves him with that excellence
That angels love good men with; even of her
That when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,
Will bless the king.”—*Shakespeare*.

When evening came and Minnie did not return, the mother in the little home on — Avenue, was so anxious about her daughter's absence, that she went to the neighbor who had brought her the message concerning Sharp's baseness, wringing her hands and weeping as if her heart would break. After the neighbor had carefully listened to the mother's recital of how her daughter had put on her best dress, and said she was going down town, an idea struck her at once. “Are you sure she did not go to get married?” she asked.

“Oh my daughter would not be so base as that; it was only last week that we spoke on that subject, and I told her then that she must wait at least another year.”

“But that is all the more reason that she should take a direct cut to matrimony and be married to-day. Are you sure that she did not leave a note for you?”

"I had not even thought of looking. She could not be so unkind to her mother as that."

The two women went to Minnie's home and without spending much time in searching, they found a note in Minnie's jewel case. It contained a brief statement of the fact that she had gone with Mr. Sharp to San Diego, there to become his lawful wife. Her mother knew that they were engaged, and that the sooner they were married, the better for them and her.

When Mrs. G. read this note she at once changed her expressions of anxiety and grief into indignation. She said her daughter should never enter her house again. But her neighbor at once showed her the folly of her wrath by telling her that if Mr. Sharp really were what she herself took him to be, her daughter would now need her love and consolation more than she ever did before. If, on the other hand, he were what her daughter thought him to be, she would by and by overlook this unkind treatment, in the consciousness that she had done the young folks wrong in allowing them to associate until their friendship ripened into love, and they were engaged.

Mrs. G. thought the matter over, and saw the wisdom of her neighbor's reasoning. She slept little that night, and was all anxiety next day until a hack stopped at her front door and her daughter and Mr. Sharp stepped on the pavement. She did not go to the front door to meet her son-in-law. When they entered, her daughter came as she had often done

before. She threw her arms about her mother's neck; then she did what she had seldom done before, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping. Sharp stood by, but said not a word. When Minnie said, "Mother, oh mother! can you ever forgive me and take me to your heart again?" he knit his brows and a cloud of displeasure spread over his face. Then he sat down, and wore the air of an impudent boy who beholds the chastisement of his fellow in disobedience, knowing that his turn is sure to come next.

Her mother was calm, though her eyes were red with weeping. She said, "Minnie, you are my daughter still. That man must prove himself worthy of my love and my home before he can stay in the latter, or have the former. I forgive you; but you have done me a cruel wrong. I do not blame you as much as I do the man who led you astray." Sharp always feared Minnie's mother. For the last two months he had dreaded meeting her, because he thought he could read in her face that he sought her daughter's ruin more than he did her heart. His lips moved nervously as he tried to look the elder of the women he had wronged in the face. Hesitating a moment, he turned on his heel, and simply saying to his wife that he would call later, he turned to the door and was gone.

In less than twenty-four hours of her married life, Minnie learned that she had broken the heart that had always been her refuge in all her little trials. She realized, too, that notwithstanding she had broken her

mother's heart, her mother was her "mother still, the holiest thing on earth." Mr. Sharp had changed his entire demeanor toward her. Twenty-four hours before, she believed that he would lay down his life for her; now she doubted whether he really and truly loved her. His first cross word had startled her, as does the crack of the rifle startle the unsuspecting deer. When subsequently she remonstrated with him for his petulance, he had told her that she was his wife now and she could expect him to talk to her in just that way. She did not tell her mother this. She was ashamed to say a word of how soon the suppliant had changed into a dictator. She simply said, "Mother, if you will not allow Mr. Sharp to live with me here, I must go to him. I promised to love him until death does us part." There was a sadness in the young wife's tone which a mother's heart alone could fully interpret. She said, "My daughter you have made your couch and must lie upon it. I fear it will not give you much rest or peace. Oh! you might have been saved from it all, if you had not been so hasty, so unadvised, so rash. Go to him until he tires of you. If he comes to us, every unpleasantness between you will be thrown upon my shoulders. God knows I have all that I can bear now."

That evening Sharp came and received his wife at the door. She told him to take her away, as her mother had commanded. In half an hour afterward, Sharp and his wife left the house in which they had had many pleasant hours, the house which Mr. Sharp

never after that entered with pleasure. They went to "furnished rooms," that greatest enemy of home-life, that breeder of jealousies, adulteries, divorces, and moral death.

We cannot follow the weary days of Minnie's first year of her married life. Sharp never drank. He did almost everything else calculated to cause his wife sorrow, but drink he did not. When their little baby came, Minnie realized that there were now two lives to love her, that of her baby and her own dear mother, who in all Minnie's sorrow never for a moment ceased to sympathize with her and to comfort her.

Her husband made money, but she had little benefit of it. He was miserly toward both his wife and his baby. His insolence, his abuse of his wife continued until her blue eyes were faded and their light extinguished with their constant weeping. When she could endure it no longer, she packed her satchel, and when her husband came from the office she said, "Mr. Sharp, I am going home to mother for a few days. Baby needs a change, and a few days absence may cause you to appreciate us both a little more." Before he said a word he struck his wife a cruel slap on the mouth. Her lips were cut, two teeth were loosened, and with the blood oozing from her mouth she sank into a chair. He then began a long and loud tirade of how she was never satisfied and always wanted to be with her mother. Minnie did not go to her mother that day, nor for several days afterward. She was ashamed to go so long as her face bore the evidence of

her husband's brutality; but when she did go, she went with the resolve that she would never return. She told her mother so, but did not tell her half of Sharp's unkindness to her. Her mother said, "Minnie, we lived before we knew Sharp. I guess we can live now. This baby in our home shall be to us both a fountain from which to fill anew the cup of our joy. It is too young to know the floods of sorrow which have rolled over our hearts before its young life was given. God grant that it may never lose itself in like experiences."

Three weeks passed before Sharp visited his wife or sent her a message. To say that those were happy weeks to Mrs. Sharp would be an untruth. As the waters will continue to stand for months after the flood that brought them has disappeared, and the waters receding into the river, flow on, as the vegetation in those bogs becomes pale and slimy, and finally dies, so often when the tide of sorrow has spent its strongest flood the results of that sorrow will continue their choking and killing influences until every blush of health fades, and every throb of joy dies in the soul. So day by day Minnie became a little weaker, a little sadder. If her mother had not seen these signs of waning life in her daughter, she would have been happy; because she had found two lives to cherish.

At the end of the third week after Minnie had taken her baby to her mother's home, both of the ladies were out in the yard. They had left the little one in its cradle. When they came in they beheld the form

of its father kneeling beside the cradle and literally smothering the little one with kisses. Then raising himself to his knees, he cast a supplicating look at his wife, and said, "Minnie, I can stand this separation no longer. If your mother will receive me into her home, she shall see that I can be to you a husband, and to her a son. I realize that life is too short to spend in such cruel separation."

Mrs. Sharp still loved her husband. With her *what* she loved had not determined *how* she loved. In all her doubting and her anguish she had not been able to tear this, her first and only love, out of her being. She looked mutely at her mother, while great tears fell from her eyes. These tears seemed the overflowings of the gladness of her heart. The old light was coming back to her blue eyes, as the old love received the food for which it pined.

Her mother had never seen the man in tears before. She questioned their sincerity; but finally her heart got the better of her judgment. She received him into her home, and treated him as she would have treated her own son. With his coming came new life to her daughter. The old blush came back to the cheek, and like the halo to the Madonna, it hid the crow-feet that her sorrow had left. When the baby cooed in its father's arms, as he sat in the easy chair which had once been the favorite seat of Minnie's father, a nobler and truer man by far than Sharp ever was, Minnie was happy. She would often turn to her piano and sing in tones not as round and full as when

Sharp first visited her home, but in tones that were more pathetic, tones that brought with them the feelings of the heart which prompted them, as the zephyr brings the perfume of the flowers which it has kissed.

Oh, that those days could have continued. But they were short lived. By and by the old irritability returned as the sirens of the dens of infamy gained their old hold on the life that had vowed to change. Mrs. G. noticed the change. Minnie realized it in all its hideousness. Her nature was extremely sensitive. If her heart would have been joined with a true life it would have enhanced and embellished it as the jewel beautifies and increases the value of the ring in which it sparkles. Strange that the God of nature should allow so much of the sweetness of heaven to dissipate in this world so hideous with the effects of sin.

When the impudence and the manifest impurity of Sharp's life threatened the peace and safety of her home, Mrs. G. promptly told him that he must go. He had not realized that this woman knew him better than he knew himself. He apologized for his angry fits and abusive language, and flatly denied his impure life. She gave him one more trial. That was his last. It might have terminated fatally to all of them. One evening he brought home a cake, with some other edibles which he was in the habit of furnishing, when he was rid of the evil spirit that seemed to have possessed him for years already. The cake was eaten that evening. Sharp himself cut it. He and all except the baby ate of it. He wished the baby to

have some of it; but the mother protested, and so it was spared. The ladies both thought that the cake tasted bitter. Mr. Sharp said, it was only the usual fault-finding spirit with what he did, that made them think the cake was bitter. His piece did not taste bitter. He was right in his assertion. *His* piece did not taste bitter.

In an hour after the cake was eaten the ladies were both in great pain. Sharp had gone away immediately after his dinner. The neighbor to whom we have already alluded in these two chapters of Sharp's biography, heard their moans, and came to see what was wrong. She saw in an instant that something unusual had occurred. In ten or fifteen minutes more a doctor was there, and administered the usual antidote for strychnine poisoning. He said a delay of fifteen minutes more would have put the ladies beyond all reach of human help or the need of it. Sharp came home at ten o'clock, nervous and excited. When he was told of what had occurred, he said that accounted for his own feelings, and so it did; but not in the way he tried to make those believe who had saved the life of the woman he had sworn to love, and her mother, whom he had promised to treat as a dutiful son would treat her.

Many days intervened before his wife, who received the biggest dose of the poison, as he had meant she should, was able to leave her bed. Her mother recovered more rapidly. Nothing was said by the two women to each other of their suspicions, until the

younger had sufficiently recovered to attend to her child. Sharp still lived in the house, but he seemed more sinister and morose than ever. There were whole nights that he did not come home. He said business kept him away. So it did, but it was the business to which human passions, and superhuman fiends lead men that are willing to be led.

When the mother told her suspicions to her daughter, she answered in a paroxysm of grief that was heart-rending to behold. She confessed, after she could compose herself sufficiently, that she believed her mother's suspicions correct. They agreed that for the sake of their child they would let the fiend go unpunished. At the same time they felt that henceforth Sharp must be banished from their home and their life.

The elder of the women begged to have the responsibility of dealing with the fiend in human form. When he came home she confronted him with the charge of trying to poison his family with strychnine. She used the strategy that a man as sinful as Sharp should have perceived, and outwitted. She told him she knew that one of his sirens down town had baked that cake, and that he knew all about the deadly dose it contained. She could prove all she said. She had thought of the advisability of having him arrested; but on one condition she would leave him to God, who in due time would make instruments to scourge him out of the very vices which were now so pleasant to him. The condition upon which she promised to keep

his crime a secret, seemed very easy to Sharp to be complied with. It was that he not only leave them all forever; but that he at once apply for a divorce. She said they would be willing to grant him the glory of seeming, in the eye of the world, the offended party.

During this speech of Mrs. G's, Sharp's color changed from its natural tan to livid white, then to scarlet. When she finished it had come back to its normal brown and tan. He admitted that some women had a way of finding out things that "got ahead of him." He could easily leave, if that would please her and her daughter, and the question of a divorce could easily be disposed of.

So kind reader, we will leave Minnie with her mother to comfort and strengthen her—with her baby to heal her broken heart with its innocent and pure affection. We will hear of them again; but for the present we drop the curtain over a scene so full of blasted hopes, so dark with sinister crime.

CHAPTER XIV.

DR. BURNS POPS THE QUESTION.

“ Where we love really, we often dread more than we desire the solemn moment that exchanges hope for certainty.”

—*Madame de Staël.*

The same day that Carrie's hero started for Santa Fe, Dr. Burns left Colorado Springs for “ a few days outing ” as he had told the young man who was to look after his practice during the doctor's absence. In fact the same train which took Carrie's hero on his way to Santa Fe also brought Dr. Burns to the little station with which we have become familiar. The book-keeper did not see him step out of the palace-car as he himself went into the smoker; but Sambo who had brought the book-keeper also saw the doctor alight from the train. He had been expecting the doctor, because Carrie had told him that he was coming, and would wish to ride home with him.

When the doctor saw who was to take him to the stone house he felt glad; because he preferred to ride with the little colored boy rather than with Jim who, we will remember, had been the book-keeper's nurse. In fact the doctor was glad that Sambo had come rather than Carrie herself. He flattered himself that he would learn more concerning Carrie than if he would be riding beside her. He would ask the little

darkie questions about the young lady, that he would not dare to ask her. As soon as they had left the little station, the doctor slipped a bright new fifty-cent piece into Sambo's hand, at the same time saying: "Sambo, I would rather ride with you this morning, than with a millionaire. You have not told me how the folks at the house are getting along. Are they all well? Is Miss Carrie expecting me?"

All these questions were asked in one breath without giving Sambo a chance to reply. As soon as he could he said, "Yes sa, Miss Carrie am expecting you, and the folks am all well. Carrie, she say to me, says she, when I left with her hero"—"Who is the hero?" interrupted the doctor. "De hero? Don you know who am de hero, Massa Doctor? De hero am de man what was so pow'ful sick after holden dem mustangs. Well, Miss Carrie, she say to me, says she, 'Sambo if Doctor Burns am at de station, you bring him up wid you. I's expecten him.'"

The doctor smiled a little smile of satisfaction. He next asked, "The clerk has not gone away to stay, has he?"

"Now who am de clerk, Massa Doctor?"

"Why the man who was so powerful sick, as you just now said."

"Oh, you mean de Miss's hero. He am no clerk. No he's a comen back in a foo days. Because I hear Massa Dives say to de man, 'Now young man, buy good ones,' Carrie she say, 'One good ting the Doc-

tor come whilst my hero am away, he can oc'py de hero's room.' "

The doctor bit his lip at this remark, and a cloud passed over his face; but he made no reply. After a moment's silence, he began again. "I guess Miss Carrie thinks a great deal of her clerk. Do they go out riding together, and has he time to play tennis with her, now that spring has come? "

"You mean Carrie's hero? Yes, they go out a heap. Carrie and de hero shoot mark. Miss Carrie can shoot most as good as de hero. Dey learn las winter when it was too cold to go off in de team. Now since de warm am come de hero am powerful busy for Mr. Dives. He rides out with Mr. Dives to see the cattle, and he pays the men and he goes with us to the station," continued Sambo in his darkie dialect, which we will not attempt to imitate. "In fac he am de busiest man around de diggins, I heerd Mr. Dives say to Miss Carrie, 'It seems I couldn't get along any more on dis here ranch ef I hadn't dat young man.' "

It soon became evident to the doctor that the clerk or whatever Carrie might choose to call her father's help, had in Sambo a staunch friend. He lapsed into quiet which was seldom interrupted until the stone house came in sight. Then Sambo said, "There am Misses on de piazza a looken for you, Massa doctor."

Sure enough there stood the neat, prim little form of Carrie Dives on the porch, shading her eyes with her hand to catch a glimpse of the doctor and Sambo

as they approached the house. When they came nearer, Carrie disappeared. As they drew up to the porch, Mr. Dives stepped out of the house, and grasped the doctor warmly by the hand and invited him into the spacious parlor. Soon Miss Carrie came in. She expressed her pleasure at seeing the doctor, and when he extended his hand she gave it a hearty shake, even as her father had done before. At the same time that she extended her soft brown little hand, she fixed her bright blue eyes fully upon his face as if to read the inmost feelings of his soul. Sambo's mother announced that lunch was ready, and they went to the dining-room; Carrie herself waited on the table. The Dives had only one domestic in the kitchen. This as we have already intimated, was Sambo's own mother. She and her child had come to Kansas in the Exodus of which our reader knows. They were poor as most of the negroes were who thought to find in Kansas, "de promised land." After much suffering she, like many others, decided to return to the sunny South. She had no money to buy a rail-road ticket, so she resolved to walk. She had gotten as far as Kansas City where Mr. Dives who was then on his way to the West from New York City, met her on the street begging a morsel of bread for herself and starving child. Mr. Dives pitied her, and on consulting his wife, he took her with him to the home in Colorado. The poor creature was only too glad to go. She had no friend in the world, so this meeting with the Dives seemed a hand sent from

Heaven to guide her to a place of rest. She had been a nurse in her girl-hood to the daughter of a rich planter, and she had taught her to read and study her Bible. Hannah as she was called, was a faithful servant, both during Mrs. Dives' life in the West, and since.

Sambo had been a poor, thin, sickly boy when he first came to Colorado; but good, wholesome food had brought him out. He was now a strong, healthy lad about fifteen years of age. He became more useful as a man of all work each day.

Carrie's mother had died when her only child was but thirteen years of age, and ever since her death (which occurred six years before Dr. Burns learned to know her) Carrie had been her father's chief comfort and joy. It was now seven years since the Dives had moved to Colorado. They had come because of Mr. Dives' health. He had suffered from acute bronchitis for several years and as a last attempt to save his life, the doctor told him to go to Colorado. He recovered his health. His wife on the other hand, died quite unexpectedly the first year they were in the West.

With Mr. Dives' return of health, fortune began to smile upon him again. He added a little to his earthly goods every year. He was not a millionaire; but he was rich enough to cease all work and live on his investments, had he chosen so to do. Carrie was never sent away to school. She had laid the foundations of an education before she left New York. A year after her mother's death Mr. Dives had engaged the ser-

vices of a young Vassar graduate, whom lung trouble drove to Colorado, and who was only too glad to have a place in the genial family which dwelt in the stone house. Carrie had the instruction of this accomplished girl for more than two years, and was a well educated young woman. Carrie was her father's only heir. He used to say that Sambo and Carrie were his heirs. He thought much of the young colored lad and would no doubt have remembered him in his will had not events come to pass, to which we will refer in due time.

After luncheon Miss Carrie pertly told the doctor that her father had some business on the ranch, and that inasmuch as he had no doubt come for an outing, he would probably consider it a pleasure to accompany him. There was nothing else for the doctor to do but to accompany him. The doctor was a good horse-back rider. He had come to the West six years before, from a city in Pennsylvania, on account of lung trouble. He soon became better, read medicine for a year with a friend of his father who lived in Colorado Springs, and then went to the University of Pennsylvania to finish his medical education. The afternoon was pleasant and the two men had a good time together.

The next day the doctor and Sambo went hunting, but they met with poor success, and Carrie teasingly told them that it was because they could not shoot well enough. They had better try to shoot mark. This they did, and the girl hit the target quite as often as either of them. We relate this to show how the doctor spent most of his visit. Sambo went with him

and Carrie wherever they went. He was now fifteen years old, strong and full of life. He was Carrie's servant. He seemed to bear the same relation to the girl, that a great St. Bernard bears to his master. It mattered nothing to him who accompanied Carrie, or upon whom she smiled; but it did matter to him to know that she was happy. Carrie on the other hand knew that Sambo was a true friend of hers. She did toward him as she would like to have been done by him had she been the woolly headed son of Ham instead of the heiress of Mr. Dives. Of course the parlor was a place Sambo never entered except to help his mother to sweep it. He was not prohibited from going there. Neither Carrie nor her father had ever told him not to enter; but his mother had. She had told him never to enter that room unless he was asked.

It was in the parlor therefore, that the doctor had Carrie to himself when her father was not there. Carrie was a good performer on the piano and sang sweetly. For this reason her father loved to sit in the parlor where he could hear and see her. Every evening promptly at nine whether the doctor was there or not, Mr. Dives would leave the room. Carrie herself knew that it would displease her father if she would not retire at ten; promptly at that hour therefore, she would call Sambo and he would show the doctor to his or rather, "the hero's room."

Dr. Burns had been a student with the very physician who attended Mrs. Dives in her last illness.

When Dr. Burns graduated at the University he was ready to take a place in the east; but he had been summoned by his old preceptor to relieve him. He did so, and that for all time; for the old doctor, soon after Burns came, shuffled off this mortal coil. It was natural that Mr. Dives should have sent for the successor of their old family physician, when the "hero" was brought unconscious to his home.

Dr. Burns had been to the Dives' home since "the clerk," as he called our friend, had not taken his advice and sought another climate. The few times that the doctor had visited the Dives since the "clerk" was well, he had treated the latter with courtesy. He felt that this was policy. So long as he knew, or thought he knew that Carrie did not love "the clerk," so long it was all right, but if he were convinced that this charming girl would marry "the clerk," he felt that he could never forgive him. There was no girl east or west that could ever take Carrie's place in this doctor's heart, so at least he tried to persuade himself.

Dr. Burns, let it be added, was not a bad man. He had a good heart, and led a pure life. He had never done anything that made him ashamed to look his fellow-man in the face; but we must confess that he was jealous of the "clerk." Of all passions, it has been well said, "jealousy is that which exacts the hardest service." The doctor had found it so already. Would he also learn that "it pays the bitterest wages?"

The third and last evening of Dr. Burns' visit had come. He had told Carrie and her father at the dinner table that evening, that he would be compelled to return early the next morning. His practice would not allow him to remain away another day, however agreeable it might be to go with Mr. Dives to the farthestmost part of the ranch, to which that gentleman invited him. That evening, as usual, Mr. Dives promptly at nine left the parlor. Dr. Burns, soon after the old gentleman left the room, drew his chair closer to the piano stool upon which Carrie was still sitting. The music had ceased, and Dr. Burns in low tones was telling her of some improvements he had made in his office, and how he intended to buy the house of his now deceased preceptor's wife. The youngest son would be of age in a few months, and then, according to the provisions of the will, the house would be sold. He told the girl that with a few changes the house would make a home as he wished. He noticed that she was interested in what he was saying. As he continued in the description of the proposed changes, Carrie thoughtlessly put her hand upon the keys of the piano. The Doctor gently took the little brown hand in his, and she did not withdraw it. He continued his conversation descriptive of the house as it would appear after the changes. Finally he said: "Then, when it is all finished, I would be supremely happy, if the little queen I have loved ever since I have known her, would consent to be enthroned there."

Carrie said, but not with her usual animation: "And who, Doctor, is this little queen, as you call her?"

The doctor was about to reply, when there was a noise of someone in the room adjoining, and in a moment afterwards, Carrie's father's voice was heard. He said, "Child, dear, had you not better retire, or the doctor will miss the train in the morning."

The charm was broken.. Carrie instantly said, "Yes, papa." The doctor looked at the hands of the clock, and saw that it was exactly half past ten. In a moment the queen he had hoped to enthrone, had quietly said, "good night," and had not returned the pressure of the hand as she gently withdrew hers from the doctor's grasp and was gone.

The doctor that night debated long and anxiously whether he should think that the girl so dear to him, loved him or not. If she did she certainly was wise enough to conceal her feelings until she had more thoroughly studied him. What else meant her keen eyes, which to her must be a very search-light, with which she read the deepest ocean of his affection? Once he thought he would insist on deciding his fate in the morning before he left the house. Then again he thought he would write to her immediately on his arrival at home. Finally he concluded that the girl knew the inmost feelings of his heart. He would give her time to know her own.

The next morning at six, Sambo took the doctor to the train. The last he saw of Carrie on that visit, was

when she appeared on the piazza when Sambo was already whirling him toward the station. She was clad in a pink wrapper and looked very sweet. She waved the doctor good-by and smiled one of her sweet smiles. She had evidently over-slept herself. Perhaps she had lain awake half the night thinking of what the doctor had told her. So the doctor reasoned. Perhaps he was right, who knows?

CHAPTER XV.

MORE ABOUT SHARP AND OCTAVIA.

“ Women with a mischief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.
A woman’s counsel brought us first to woe,
And made her man his paradise forego
Where at heart’s ease he lived; and might have been
As free from sorrow as he was from sin.”—*Dryden*.

The time has come when a fuller introduction of Miss Octavia Newman to our readers is necessary. We have visited her childhood home. We have learned something of her parentage, and in so doing we have become acquainted with two of the most potent forces that enter a human life. The childhood home well described, gives us an infallible knowledge of the time and country in which a man lives. It is the window through which comes the most light upon the character we are studying, and out of which we look to see the world around. The scope of this story will not allow us to study minutely the family history of Octavia’s father. He alone is the character in this little knot of lives which for a time clustered around the Nieman home, concerning whom we must be content to know least. Some of those forces which exhibited themselves in the actions and speech of Octavia must have had their origin in the ancestry of her

father; because we do not find the evidence of their existence in her mother.

The world has made wonderful progress in scientific development; but after all we know very little about ourselves. There never was an age in which it was truer that "The proper study of mankind is man," than in the age in which we are now living. It seems strange that after learning so much about everything else, we should know so little about ourselves. Perhaps it is because we have left to us all eternity to know ourselves, that we pay so little attention to the subject in this life. The palmist says, he can prognosticate the destiny of a man through all his earthly life, and consequently how he will begin eternity, by simply studying the lines in his hands. He professes to be able to do this before the experience of years has left the record of a life in those mysterious tablets. It is true, he says, the character is best read after the palm is well written over with the experience of years. Then, too, the phrenologist claims to tell the strength of the body, and the characteristics of the soul, from the little prominences on the skull. His science, too, to say the least, is wonderful. All of this does not take away the mystery that surrounds every earthly life. It rather deepens it. How came those lines in the hand? How happens it that the lines in my hand are not precisely the same as in yours or my father's? Why are there characteristics in my life which were never seen in the life of my parents? Why must the student of your biography go back two,

three generations, to find *that* in your ancestry which is so prominent in you? Why must the physician assign the cause of certain physical weaknesses in you to the life habits of your ancestry in the third and fourth generation? If you will answer me these questions, kind reader, then I will tell you why there were at work in the child-life of "Octavia Newman, M. D.," those forces which distinguished her from the rest of her family. We will admit that if she would have tried to curb those disreputable qualities in her being, she might have, by and by, regulated them and eaten some of life's most luscious fruits from them. We admit that she might have regulated those wild impulses and head-strong desires by judiciously watching herself, even as the rider regulates the untamed steed by the bit, and by properly watching it. This she might have done, and right here her moral responsibility came in, and right here it comes into every life.

One of the distinguishing traits of Octavia's character was her ambition. Ambition is a noble faculty of the soul, when properly accompanied. Its Latin derivation gives it its true meaning. It is "the act of going about" in life, or if not the act, at least the motive power. Take it out of our being and you take the wheels from the vehicle, and the force which draws them. The evil in Octavia's nature, therefore, did not lie in the fact that she had ambition, but that she had an enormous, a real Napoleonic ambition, without the other qualities of head and heart which are so

essential to the true man or woman. She had one of those unholy ambitions, which, like Milton's Satan, caused her to act as if she thought that it was

“ Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.”

Another characteristic of Octavia was her pride. Pride is always the companion of ambition. It is not the born companion of the latter; but it is the companion who seeks and wins and weds an ambition when it once becomes a monstrosity among the faculties of the soul, and a monstrosity in Octavia's soul her ambition had become when we first saw her in her matured, her professional life. The man or woman without a lawful pride is in danger of the same follies which threaten the one who has left this monster to swallow all his other qualities. In Octavia pride was as manifest as the peacock's tail is manifest in that fowl's make-up. You could not be in her society a day without seeing that ambition and pride were the two ruling powers in her soul. Her pride and her ambition should have borne her above some sins and follies which thwarted the attainment of the objects that pride and ambition when firmly wedded generally attain.

We have said that pride and the lack of it, bring the soul to commit one and the same follies. In Octavia's experience we have seen this illustrated already. Had she not been so intensely proud, she would have married Peter True, and so far as human judgment can see, she would have been a happy wife,

and, although left in an early widowhood, she would have been able to live a useful and comfortable life. On the other hand, if she would not have had some pride, Peter True would not have cared for her any more than he cared for the score of girls in the neighborhood. It was Octavia's haughty spirit that drew Peter True, as the light draws the ignorant moths, and it was that same pride which seared his heart and made it incapable of seeking the love of another woman. A reasonable amount of pride will keep the hands clean and the face sweet, but the excess of pride will always thirst after the unattainable, and when once convinced that it is unattainable, it will cause the victim to descend into an apathy that shows its physical as well as moral effect. We do not say that we will find it so in Octavia's case; but who can tell?

That which made ambition and pride such dangerous companions in Octavia's soul, was the fact that they had at least nursed, if not begotten offspring even more hurtful. She had shown her selfish disposition in her childhood. It grew with her years. Her mother, her teachers had endeavored to curb it, but in vain. Her education at the hospital had brought her face to face with human suffering, and should have developed that sympathy which distinguishes man from the brute, and which does so much to sweeten the bitter potions which life presses to every pair of human lips. But it did not. She might well have summed

up the condition of her own disposition in the lines of the poet Sheridan, when he says:

“ I never could any lustre see
In eyes that would not look on me;
I never saw nectar on a lip
But where my own did hope to sip.”

Another dangerous offspring these two, ambition and pride, nursed in Octavia's soul, was her heartlessness. We have seen in her relations with her own mother, as well as in her conduct toward poor Peter True, that the girl had no heart. We have seen it again on the mountain-side, when she so unexpectedly sees the knife with the initials “ N. N.” upon it, and reads in the countenance of the man who possesses it her own family lineage. The pride which keeps her from allowing herself to associate with a muleteer, even sufficiently to know whether her suspicions are correct or not,—the pride which keeps her from finding out whether this man is not her supposed dead brother, for fear the Dives would find it out, should he be her brother, that pride causes her to exhibit a heartlessness which must bring every one who learns to know her, to despise her. What could be more cruel than for a daughter to refuse to staunch the bleeding heart of a fond, true mother, simply because her own selfish ends might be thwarted thereby? After this insight into Octavia's character we need not remind our readers that she was not well balanced. All the nobler qualities of her soul had thrown the reins to these dangerous powers, which like unre-

strained steeds were bearing her on a journey which might well cause us to close our eyes, so as not to see the fearful destination. Good common sense would have redeemed her nobler soul powers and would have sanctified her ambition and curbed her pride; but good common sense was something in which Octavia was lacking. If that judge had ever sat on the throne of her soul, he had forsaken his seat long before we met her in the Sierras. We shall see whether the future reveals anything that will cause us to reverse our judgment of "Octavia Newman, M. D." We have spent all this time in analyzing the character of Octavia, in order that we may be prepared to understand her in her action during that part of her life-history to which we now invite your attention.

We have intimated in a former chapter that Mr. Sharp had at last turned up at the home of the Dives, after considerable time had elapsed between our friends' arrival in the Metropolis and the actual fulfilment of his promise to call on Octavia. The day after the party had arrived, the nurse had already expected him; but he had not come. The days had lengthened into several weeks and he had not come. Octavia had at the end of the first week received a note which was written in Kansas City. It simply stated that the pressure of his business had caused him to neglect calling on his friends whilst in the city, and ere he had been aware of it he had been hurried off to Kansas City by the pressure of that same business. Octavia kept this note, and said nothing to anyone about it.

She was glad when she was summoned to leave the home of the Dives for a week "to discharge her professional duties," as she had been in the habit of announcing such a summons to her friends.

The Dives themselves were wondering why Mr. Sharp had not called on Octavia since they had left him at the depot. They had thought that Octavia had made quite an impression on him. They felt sure that he had made one on her. Perhaps he was calling on her where she was now employed. Before she had left the Dives' home they had teased her about Sharp's not calling. They had reminded her, jokingly, it is true, that those alone are best in love who love but once, and that for years.

Octavia said she did not tell them all she knew, (and a smile of satisfaction passed over her face as she said it) nor did she expect them to tell her everything they knew. She would keep her own counsel. Then she added, "Girls, I will surprise you one day most wonderfully."

"You have done that a number of times already," said Jennie. "For instance, when you allowed yourself to giggle and whisper and ogle with a man whom you had met only a few days before."

This was too much for Octavia. She blushed crimson, not with shame, but with anger. She opened her mouth, but she did not speak. Octavia sometimes thought twice before she spoke once, but the occasions were rare when that was the case. It was good that

this was one of them. She swept from the room in majestic silence.

When she was gone the elder Miss Dives said, "Jennie, we must stop teasing that girl. She gets so mad. She will leave the house if we don't."

"I am sure that would not be a misfortune. I for one would not be sorry."

"You forget that she nursed you through a dangerous spell of pneumonia last fall. When the doctor said to me, 'Your sister, I fear, is beyond human help,' and I told Octavia what he had said, she replied, 'Doctors do not know everything. I am glad he and all of them give up the case. I will show you what a good nurse can do.'"

"Yes," said Jennie, "she took as much pride in 'pulling me through,' as she called it, as a carver takes in the image he has carved. It was not sympathy for you nor love for me that did it. It was all done in order that she might say, 'there, now, am I not smart?'"

"Your life was saved, dear, and that is enough. Let us not speak about the workman so unkindly, when we so plainly see the proof of his skill."

"Do not forget God, Susie, or he will judge us," was Jennie's reply. "Do you not wonder, sister, what became of Mr. Sharp? There must be some very grave and very important business absorbing him, or he would have turned up ere this. Depend upon it, if Octavia knew where he is, she would not be so anxious to keep her own counsel."

“ ‘Two may keep counsel when the third’s away,’ do not forget that, my little sister,” replied Susan Dives.

Here the conversation ended. One of the girls was called from the room, and the other resumed her crocheting. You, kind reader, no doubt, wonder what has become of Mr. Sharp. Some very important events were occurring, and it depended all on how Mr. Sharp would be able to manage these events, as to whether the Dives or Octavia would ever see his shadow across the Dives’ door-way. We shall presently see how he managed.

CHAPTER XVI.

CARRIE AND "THE HERO" HAVE AN EVENING TOGETHER.

"Love, Love, my Love.

The best things are the truest:

When the earth lies shadowy dark below

Oh then the heavens are the bluest."—*Gilder*.

One evening just as the sun was sinking in majestic splendor behind the great rocks of the mighty mountains, Sambo and Carrie's hero drove up to the stone house. Mr. Dives had received a letter from the hero stating the day and train he expected to arrive at the little station where he in the last year had gotten on and off the cars so often. Sambo had been sent to the station at the proper time, and he had shown his great white teeth like a great St. Bernard when he saw his friend step off the train. The hero had given him a hearty hand-shake and inquired after everybody, before they actually started from the station. He had heard only once from the stone house. He had received a letter pertaining to the errand upon which he had gone to Santa Fe. Carrie had not written to him nor had he asked her to write. Nothing would have delighted him more than to have received a letter which he knew to have been penned by her little hand; but he felt that he had no right to ask it of her.

Carrie would have written if she had been asked; but she was the kind of fruit that did not fall by simply looking at the tree.

But here they were in front of the stone house. When Carrie heard the rumbling of the cart-wheels on the hard road she came to the piazza. She had on the same pink wrapper which she wore the morning Dr. Burns saw her waving her hand after him, and heard her shouting her cheery good-by. Her hair was placed in a Psyche knot, and her brown forehead adorned with her own black locks. Her bewitching blue eyes sparkled and danced as he had seen them again and again when she was happy. To him she never looked more beautiful than that evening as she stretched out her hand in friendly greeting. She said, "I am glad to see you. Hope you had a nice trip and a good time." Of course the hero responded in the affirmative, and told her he would tell her of all he saw, at his earliest opportunity.

That evening after dinner Mr. Dives and the hero went to the office and when Carrie came in an hour afterwards the old gentleman told her to leave them alone as they had important work to attend to. It was ten o'clock when they went to their rooms that evening, and Carrie had not had a chance to talk over the trip. Mr. Dives told his daughter the next morning that the trip had been a financial success. The mules had been shipped a week before our friend left Santa Fe, and when he himself arrived most of them were already sold. The car-load had netted the neat

sum of one thousand dollars. The old gentleman was delighted with our friend's work. He said he had never had anybody working for him East or West, that was more reliable and showed better business tact than this young man did.

There was a great deal to do that week, and Carrie did not get her talk with her friend until Saturday of the week following his arrival. Then she and he were in the parlor together. He had asked her to sing and play for him; but she insisted on being told all that he had seen on his visit to the indian villages. He forgot that he was tired when he was once fully started in telling her all he had seen. She was intensely interested. She said that if he ever went again, she would insist on inviting her teacher who was still in Colorado Springs, and who she knew, would enjoy the trip wonderfully. Would he be willing to be burdened with the care of two ladies?

When he had told Carrie all he knew, and answered all the questions she asked, he said: "Now tell me what kind of a time Dr. Burns and you had whilst I was away." Carrie had already told him that the doctor had spent several days with them at the ranch, whilst her hero was away. Sambo, the sly coon, had not hinted at the doctor's visit, either because he did not wish to say anything that Carrie might not wish him to tell, or because he did not think himself capable of answering all the questions Carrie's hero might see fit to ask. He was diplomatic enough to know that silence on that subject was the best.

Carrie said in answer to the request her hero had made: "We had a real good time whilst the doctor was here, but I would have enjoyed it better if you had been here also." Carrie's hero looked pleased when she said this; but when after pausing a little, she added, "We could have played tennis then. As it was, we did not have enough to enjoy the game," the smile of satisfaction which had come on his lips, faded away.

After Carrie had told all that she and the doctor and Sambo, and her father had done to make the time pleasant for Dr. Burns, without at all alluding to what they did in the evening, our friend said: "I guess in the evening you sang and played for the doctor. Can he sing?"

"No, the doctor cannot sing as well as you can. He does not play at all; but he seems to enjoy when others play and sing."

"I am sorry I was not here to hear you sing and play; because I never tire of your music," added our friend.

Carrie did not allude to the conversation which she and the doctor had the last evening of his visit; but we will confess, that she wondered in her own mind how a knowledge of that conversation would affect the young man who was sitting on the very chair that Dr. Burns sat on when he wished to have her promise to become the queen of his home.

Whilst these thoughts were passing through the brain of pretty Carrie Dives, her hero was thinking of

the doctor, and asking himself how long the interludes between Carrie's songs had been, and whether Doctor Burns sat like a dull overgrown boy during those interludes as he was doing, without knowing what to say. Carrie broke the silence by saying: "Do you know that I am getting a distinguished visitor for the summer?" The hero replied that he did not. Who could he be, he asked. Carrie replied that it was not a he at all; but that it was just the sweetest and cutest young lady in New York City. It was none other than her own charming little cousin. She told him that her cousin was twenty years old and that she resembled Carrie, people had said, enough to be a twin sister when they were still together in the city. No doubt her cousin had changed since she saw her last. She at least knew that Jennie Dives was not as black as she was. She had black eyes whilst she herself had blue eyes, as he could tell if he ever took the pains to look at them.

"As if anybody could see you a minute without seeing your eyes," interrupted our friend. "If she looks like you, Carrie," he added, without the slightest sign that he was saying anything that could be interpreted as flattery by the girl before him, "she is pretty, and no doubt agreeable. I will be pleased to meet her; that is, if she cares to have a clerk enter her society."

Carrie interrupted him by saying, "As if a clerk, as you see fit to style yourself, were not as good as anybody else. Besides, that is just the way her

father and mine began life. I shall introduce you as 'my hero,' and not as my father's book-keeper. Who knows—" Here the girl hesitated, then left her sentence unfinished. The young man gave her a searching look, which she returned. The two pairs of eyes asked questions which their souls did not dare to answer. Had our friend not felt his position as he did, and thought the girl so far above him, it might have been different. As it was, the clock struck eleven, and Carrie with a start arose and said, "good night," and was gone. Our young man closed the parlor, outened the light, and went to his room. Cicero says: "Modesty is that feeling by which honorable shame acquires a valuable and lasting authority." It was no shame that was acquiring the "lasting authority" over our friend's affections, and perhaps was forever restraining them from asserting themselves boldly in the presence of Carrie Dives.

He decided that next morning, in the presence of her father, and on the way to church (in the little village which had recently grown up around the railroad station) he would declare his love, and receive his fate as the condemned prisoner received the keen edge of the executioner's axe. It would be a relief to have the worst over. He laughed at how very silly his attitude would appear if he would thus "make a fool of himself," as he termed it, on the way to church. The laugh relieved the tension of his heart, and with it his nerves. He finally fell asleep and did not awake until Hannah rang the bell for breakfast.

It would be interesting to know how Carrie spent the time intervening between the hour when she left our friend in the parlor, and one o'clock, when she fell asleep. Carrie Dives was a modest girl, and did not wear her heart on her sleeve, so I do not know that it would be at all edifying if we would enter her room and try to read her thoughts. We do know what our friend did not know as he was tossing on his bed, and that is that she has not as yet promised to marry Dr. Burns. We can infer, too, that a girl with such searching eyes could look upon the heart of her hero and know that he loved her. Woman generally reads a man's heart by instinct, unless pride or vanity have deadened her sensibilities.

CHAPTER XVII.

SHARP.

“O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal.”

—*Shakespeare.*

When Mr. Sharp left the party which he had accompanied from the Pacific Coast, he said that he would establish himself in a good, comfortable hotel, probably the Astor, then he would call and see Miss Octavia. He had told Octavia this because he was thoroughly convinced that she was the only one in the party who cared in the least where he went, or whether he would call on them. We have already seen that Sharp did not call near as soon as he had promised the nurse he would. There were good reasons for his not calling, but none of those who had traveled with him knew those reasons.

When the days passed into weeks and Sharp did not call, Octavia became anxious about him. He might have met with some accident. She scanned the papers daily for the first week, hoping that she might gain some tidings from him. She herself had many thoughts concerning him. She confessed to herself that she had been very favorably impressed with him. He was married, it was true. He himself had acknowledged it. She was sorry that it was so; but

might not a married man, lawfully divorced, love just as ardently as any other man? But the rumor that Mr. Sharp was to blame for the separation of himself and wife was by no means confined to the friends of his wife. She had to confess that the only person who took Mr. Sharp's part in the matter was the cousin of the Dives. Perhaps she knew his affairs best. Mr. Sharp himself had told her that he had a bright, interesting little girl of five summers. How could he leave that bright little girl to the training of its mother, when he knew that that mother was not a fit person to take care of the child? How could a true father leave his child for any reason? Thus for a moment, that just, that true judge, good old common sense, came back to the judgment seat he so seldom occupied in the nurse's soul, to warn her against her impending danger. He came, so it seemed to Octavia's friends afterwards, to deliver his last sentence. He told her the truth; but her love—yes, Octavia confessed that she loved Mr. Sharp—her love, that master of all arts, that judge which is so easily bribed, that passion which runs away with every sober faculty, caused her to silence her conscience. Mr. Sharp was a good man or he could not have succeeded in life as he had. She had heard from his own lips how, from a boy, he had to rely upon himself for an education, a home, a business, in fact for everything which men prize in this life. But then suppose he did not love her? She did not care, she would reply to that thought. She had some business she must transact ere

long; if Mr. Sharp would not soon come she would be compelled to call upon someone else. Octavia admitted but one reason why she would have nothing to do with the attorney of the Dives—they would know all about her business. But would they have known all about her business? Did he make a habit of telling the Dives, or anybody, his clients' business? The real reason why Miss Octavia would have nothing to do with the old friend of the Dives, was purely and simply because he was not Mr. Sharp.

If Octavia had known the real reason Mr. Sharp delayed his call, she would have been very much shocked. The truth of the matter was that even then Mr. Sharp, the man of the splendid business capacity, the man who had made his way in the world without the help of anybody, was languishing because of his business propensities. Even then a dark cloud was obscuring the horizon of James Sharp, Esq. Even then a dark blot was threatening to settle on his fair name, as Octavia pictured that name to be. These are the particulars, nothing serious as Mr. Sharp tried to persuade himself, and as a man who has attained the stage in wrong-doing he had attained, will try to persuade himself. He had foreclosed a mortgage for a New York firm, on some Los Angeles property a few weeks before he left that town. He had forgotten to forward the draft for the money, even when he knew that the New Yorkers knew that the transaction was complete. They had wired him before he thought of leaving Los Angeles, that if the money were not paid

at once he would be arrested; but he had paid no attention to the matter. At Kansas City he had been wired by Mr. Ketchem that the police were on his track. He in turn telegraphed for a draft to pay the two thousand dollars he owed the New York party. Mr. Ketchem had forwarded the same at once, and he had gone to the office of the people in New York, as if nothing were wrong. The draft had not yet arrived; but he wished them to understand that he was honest. Had it not been for Octavia's letter from the administrator of the True estate, it is doubtful whether Mr. Sharp would have paid the obligation, which took nearly half of all he had left in the world, so rapid had been the decrease in his pile, since he had become an inveterate poker player. That letter had decided him to be as honest as necessary to keep in the good graces of a lady whom he knew to be honest, to say the very least about her.

When he arrived in the office of his clients in New York he had introduced himself; whereupon they invited him into their private office, and whilst one was talking to him another had gone for a policeman and the necessary papers. After he was arrested he was simply detained until they knew whether the money was really coming or not coming. It did come in a few days, and he was released only to be summoned to Kansas City to keep some property which the firm of Sharp and Ketchem had acquired there in exchange for some stock in an Irrigation company, from going into the hands of their creditors. This had required

some time; but at last Mr. Sharp was himself again, and quietly seated in the smoking parlor of a Pullman on his way back to New York. He was congratulating himself that no one could outwit him. Even the people in New York who had had him arrested admitted that they had been too much in a hurry; and that perhaps all would have come out right had they not been so hasty. Mr. Sharp had taken the part of injured innocence. He had simply delayed the remittance, he said, because he knew he would come to the Metropolis anyhow. They had not allowed the arrest to be published, and consequently Octavia was kept in ignorance of the affair for a long time, in fact for so long a time, that the knowledge, when she did gain it, did her no good.

There was one thought that perplexed Mr. Sharp that day on his way from Kansas City to the Metropolis, and that thought was how he should go about offering himself to Miss Dr. Newman as he had called her, much to her delight. If he were quite sure that he had made an impression on her heart he would try to deepen that impression and then at the earliest moment he would propose marriage to her. But he had thus far neglected to get a divorce from his lawful wife. Would it not be risky to propose to another woman whilst he had a wife? When she found out that he had been still married when he made love and proposed to her, it might spoil all. He did not condemn himself for not having gotten his divorce before. He did not wish any property which belonged to his wife

and child to go into other hands. He had lately heard that his mother-in-law was sick and he knew that when he left his wife she had looked like a shadow. Would a sane man under such circumstances get a divorce? He asked this question and answered it very decidedly in the negative. He was perfectly excusable for having put off that business. But this fact that he was not divorced might impede his freedom of action in this the second matter relating to matrimony. If Octavia did not love him, then it would be indeed a delicate question to ask her to be employed in settling the True estate. Besides his fooling with a paltry two thousand dollars, might by this time have lost him much more. Perhaps Octavia was by this time already engaged in transferring the money into her own name. In that case he still had one chance left him, he would court her for all he was worth, and win her hand in spite of herself, by foul means or fair. Had he not succeeded once before, when he had had more difficulties to encounter than this time? The idea of his failing! He knew no such word as fail. The way to fortune and to fame was still open to him, he chuckled to himself. The porter who had watched him from a mirror which reflected his base image, said to himself, "Dat am a bad man. He am no good. Dis nigger see de debil laughen in his face. Wonder who he am, and what plans he am concocten?" Just then Sharp called, "Here porter, go to the news agent and get me two cigars." He gave the porter fifty cents, and he brought him two

ten cent cigars; he let him keep the change, but the porter murmured as he went away, "He am a bad egg, that am plain as the nose on my face." The darkie's nose was plain, that was sure.

On his arrival in New York he went to a cheap lodging house. He took his dinner on West street. It consisted of a piece of steak, bread and butter, a potato or two, boiled in salt water, and coarse black bread with coffee. As he sat down and scanned this fare, a voice said within him; "Old man, you are down to what you were seven years ago. You have less than you then had. You have lost your clear conscience. In fact you have no conscience at all. You have lost your good name. Sharp, you are poor! What is worse, you have made others poor. You have robbed men and women, not only of their money, but of their happiness, their character. Sharp, you are a bad man." He gave the table-leg a vicious little kick, and then he began to eat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OCTAVIA SECURES HER AGENT.

“A business with an income at its heels.”—*Cowper*.

Several weeks have elapsed since Mr. Sharp called on Octavia, and it is time that our readers know their plans. We have already seen that when Sharp finally called on Miss Octavia she was at home. Call it destiny or call it fate, which so arranged that she was home that evening when Sharp called; but Providence it was not, unless it is true what our old Presbyterian divines believed, that the man that is born to be hung can't be drowned. The nurse was home, and when the servant who answered the bell heard the man who stood before her ask whether Miss Octavia Newman, M. D., was home, that personage also heard the question from the top of the stairs where she had been standing, in her eagerness to know whether Mr. Sharp had not at last come. Octavia had not waited for the summons. She had come to the door before the servant could receive Mr. Sharp's card. Octavia stretched her thin, soft hand toward the Los Angeles attorney, and he had taken it into his larger palm, not eagerly, nor clutchingly; but in the same way in which the cat takes a mouse which she knows to be fully in her power. Sharp smiled, and showed his teeth as he smiled. Whenever Sharp smiled his thin lips would

stretch until they became thin as pasteboard. Then his teeth would show like those of a dog when he is ready to bite. Octavia, who professed to be able to read human nature, for some reason or other never thought of the disposition that must govern a man or woman that smiles the way Sharp smiled. His cold, steel gray eyes looked searchingly into hers, as much as if he intended to ask, "have you made arrangements to transfer the property willed you, into your name?" Sharp would look people squarely into the eyes on occasions when like the serpent, he wished to sting them. At other times he studiously avoided seeing the countenance of the person addressing him. A thief can, when he wishes it, stare an honest man out of countenance; but he cannot keep his lips from twitching. Of late Sharp's lips twitched, when not too tightly stretched into one of his dog like smiles. Any one who could read character and was acquainted with Sharp, would have realized that he had come for plunder, and that he had made his plans to get it. The unconscious Octavia did not suspect, much less realize just then that that was the object of Sharp's visit. Had she been asked the reason Sharp came to see her rather than the Dives girls, or Felix, she would have blushed, until her white cheeks would have been as crimson as they were when Jennie Dives had made her angry on account of this same Mr. Sharp.

Mr. Sharp easily drifted into conversation with regard to the business that had taken him to Kansas

City. He had explained that when he and Mr. Ketchem had been in the real-estate business they had become favorably known all over the United States, and had invested thousands of dollars for persons they had never seen. So large a business he said, could not be closed up in a day or two, now that they had dissolved partnership. There were collections to be made, which he with his superior legal knowledge alone could make. He knew the laws pertaining to such matters, in all the different states of the Union, and could make collections and transfer property anywhere, and without cost or worry to his clients. There was such a thing as learning a business thoroughly, and that is just what he had done.

Miss Octavia listened with interest as Mr. Sharp dilated on his superior knowledge of the very subject with which she was then specially concerned. When he ceased, her eyes sparkled, and the observer might have seen her form straighten as she said, "I, too, am interested in the real-estate business just now. It is all in my own property however that I am interested. An old friend of mine, one with whom I went to school, has recently left this mundane sphere, and as a token that he had not forgotten me, has left me the greater part of his estate."

"Indeed," replied Sharp, his eyes sparkling, and his lips wearing not the dog-smile, but a smile which puckered them, and for the time softened the hard lines which his vicious disposition had fixed and was fixing more firmly every day. "I suppose the gentle-

man who has left you this property is an old lover, or rather one who first desired to gain a fortune, or as we used to say, 'buy a nice cage,' before he claimed his bird? It is sad that he should be called away when his fortune was about to be consummated. It must have been very sad for you thus to lose the man who did so much for you."

"Perhaps it would have been," replied Octavia, "but I can not talk from experience on that subject. Good friends we were, it is true; but Mr. True's position in life was not such that our union would have been at all possible. He did not move in the same sphere in which it has been my lot to move. We never had the slightest idea of a matrimonial alliance."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Octavia. I did not know the social sphere in which your friend moved. I know that persons of your social standing in life, would not be happy with a man who could not enter into your aspirations, and sympathies. 'We pine for kindred natures to enter our own,' you know," said Sharp with a big sigh. Octavia read in that sigh, a sad experience in the life of the man who sat before her. Sharp meant that she should; but outside of the hypocrisy which it concealed and the meaning it was intended to convey, it was as empty as a vacuum itself.

Sharp was not in a hurry to have Octavia commit her business into his hands. He knew she would. He wished to toy with her, so as to disarm her of any suspicion that she might be running a risk in committing the getting of her estate into his care. She would

infer that he was disinterested personally. At last however, he allowed her to come to the point. She asked him plainly whether he would undertake the business, or whether he was already over-burdened. He replied he had a good-deal to do, but his brain was like a stage-coach, there was always room for more. At this stale joke Octavia laughed immoderately. A drunken man, good humored, will laugh at nothing. A sober man who congratulates himself that a matter which has weighed upon him has at last been successfully disposed of, will give vent to his joyous feelings at the merest shadow of a joke. Octavia was intoxicated with joy. She sent the pleasure her soul felt out into the room where Sharp could view it, covered, it is true, in the scanty attire of his thread-bare joke. Sharp saw that her soul had given vent to its feelings, and he too laughed, as Octavia thought, at his own joke—but not so, he too laughed, under cover of his joke. The laugh was prompted by the consciousness that his conquest was complete, complete so far as he wished completion; so far as his plans were laid. The future might precipitate emergencies, which would compel him to change his plans; but the victory already gained assured him that there were other triumphs in store. The way to fortune, if not to fame, was paved once more for him.

Miss Octavia asked her attorney what she must do herself in order to expedite her business. Thus far she said, she had simply written Mr. Bear, the administrator, that she would either come personally or send

her agent, to look after her interests. Would it be necessary for her to get a *habeas corpus*, in order to hurry up the matter? She had heard people talk about *habeas corpus*, and read about it, but did not know exactly what it was. Sharp replied, that when an attorney understood his business as thoroughly as he did, a *habeas corpus* was entirely unnecessary. They were necessary where agents were bunglers. He said this without a smile but he did long for the merest shadow of an excuse to laugh, so that Octavia might not suspect that he was laughing at the density of her ignorance.

There were many questions which Octavia wished to ask with regard to the disposal of her property after she had it. She felt sure that she herself did not care to live in Omaha. She knew it would be best to sell out as soon as she could. What did she know about cattle-raising? She had asked herself these questions many times during the last few weeks.

After they were through discussing their business, Miss Octavia asked Mr. Sharp where he intended to reside for the present. He said that after he had fully closed his business affairs in Los Angeles he expected to be on the wing for a little while. His business would require it, he thought. He would be compelled to seek a friend in New York City with whom, or rather in whose care he could receive his mail. He had not asked any of his acquaintances in the city whether they would be willing to do that for him. Octavia replied that she could

do it, if he did not object to having his mail go through her hands. Sharp lied when he said that that would be all right. He knew it would be all wrong.

It was after ten that evening when Sharp left the Dives home. He said on leaving that he would first write a letter to Mr. Bear before he would go West; perhaps it would not be necessary for him to go. He might have added that he had no money to go even if it were necessary. In fact, how to get money was the important subject to which Mr. Sharp must turn his attention; but how to get it he did not know that evening, as he sat in the Dives parlor. How he managed it we will presently see. For this time we must bid him adieu, and good night.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ PETER GRAY’S ” VISIT TO THE ENCAMPMENT, AND CITY OF IRON VIGOR.

“ What’s open made
To justice, that justice seizes. What know the laws,
That thieves do pass on thieves? ’Tis very pregnant,
The jewel that we find we stoop and take it,
Because we see it; what we do not see
We tread upon and never think of it.”—*Shakespeare*.

Not two hundred miles from New York city is a little city situated in the midst of a long, fertile valley. For many years this was a small town, the site of which was not unknown in the days of the Revolution. For many years it slumbered in that valley unconscious of its strength; but by and by the immense mountain of iron not many miles away began to be utilized. As iron in the blood gives vigor to the body, so iron gave this little village strength. The fresh young life which iron from the mountain not far away brought it, caused it to awake out of its long sleep and look around upon the grand possibilities which it might grasp. With its activity, came growth, as comes growth to the body when properly nourished. As iron in the blood causes the blush of health to come to the cheek that before was pale and thin, so iron in the city and out of it, brought the town beauty.

One fine home after another was erected, one improvement after another was made.

At the time of this story, a beautiful park in the mountains, where the water bubbled high in the air from natural fountains, and where the giants of the forest were stirred by the invigorating breezes that seldom visited the valley during the hot summer months, had become the centre of attraction. Art had joined hands with nature and had embellished the place. Cottages had been erected, roads, over which during many years before the mountaineer drove his slow and over-burdened team, were straightened and graded. On the very top of the highest point of the mountain an observatory had been erected, from the top of which there is one of the grandest views in all that section of country. The city to which we have already referred can be seen, "like a child in dreamless slumber bound," nestling in the valley at the point farthest removed from the surrounding hills. Close to the city the smoke arises from half a dozen furnaces, which have been the means of infusing the results of the iron, if not the strength of it, into the life of that city. In the summer season, when the observatory is used, the landscape is beautifully variegated with ripening harvests, green pastures and grazing cattle, whilst everywhere stately farm-houses are nestled among clumps of green trees.

This pretty park has attracted hosts of visitors from everywhere, for many miles around, and its charms have been extensively advertised. Assemblies and

encampments of all kinds find their way to this spot in the mountains. At the time to which this story refers, the militia of the state had pitched its tents just outside of the forest, on a plain which nature and man had cleared of trees many years before.

Late one evening, during this encampment, a man came to one of the principal streets in the city of iron vigor. He wrote his name on the hotel register. The clerk of the hotel opened his eyes wide when he read, "Peter Gray, L. A., Cal." It was not often that he could see names upon that register from places as far away as California. "You have had a long journey, Mr. Gray," said the clerk. "Have you recently come from that city?"

"Yes, almost directly, I have made stops of a few days in pretty towns, like yours, along the road."

That was all that was said to the stranger that night. He was assigned his room, and immediately retired. The next morning he was up bright and early. He asked the clerk why he saw so many soldiers, and was told,—what he already knew—that there was an encampment of the state's militia in the park. The stranger asked the question because he wished to find out all he could with regard to the encampment. Then he asked the clerk about some of the finest houses, and who owned them. He said he belonged to a real estate agency which made it a business not only to sell lots in the city of L. A., but also to erect homes for purchasers. Having a large business they could compete with all firms in the cheap-

ness of building, material, etc. The company to which he belonged, also colonized government lands, and bought large ranches which they subdivided and sold to settlers. They were doing great good to the state as well as to poor people in search of homes. He was out advertising the business. He made it a point to visit the finest homes and take pictures of them, and sometimes he was invited into the interior, and actually had made sketches of the floor plans of some of the finest homes of the land. Many of these had already been utilized by their architect in the city from which he came. Their architect never took a plan as he, the agent, gave it to him; but he always improved it. Many persons, who afterwards visited his city, were surprised to find homes almost like their own, all of which was the result of his work.

The clerk was interested. He gave him the names and places of residence of some of the wealthiest of the citizens, in whose possessions the strength of the iron-mountain was making itself most manifest. The stranger was careful to note just how long the encampment would last. He said he intended to visit it before he left for the west.

That day our friend called at some of the places designated by the clerk. He was well dressed, generally rang the front door-bell when he saw a home that specially impressed him, and politely told the person who came to the door that he was about to take a picture of the house. Sometimes he made only a pencil sketch. Sometimes he told the persons whose houses

he sketched very much of what he told the hotel-clerk. Sometimes he pointed out the chances for making money, by buying some of the stock which his firm would soon place on the market. He explained that thus far they had not done it because it had all been taken by private subscriptions. He had positively none for sale. He showed some of the pictures he carried with him, of houses which had already been erected by the firm. In this way he begat confidence in the people. This man wished none of their money, he simply wished to see their fine homes, that was all. Often they would throw their entire house open for his inspection without his asking the favor. Sometimes when he was specially anxious to know the interior he asked in a quiet way to see some of the rooms, or if he thought this would not do, he would attain his object by flattery. "A house with as pretty proportions as yours, no doubt is planned just as carefully on the interior. I trust the pretty external plan is not marred by the interior arrangement. Did you build the house? I would infer that a person of good taste built it." In this way he had little trouble in gaining access to any home he wished to enter. "He had been told of their home," he would explain, "by the clerk at the —— hotel where he was stopping." The fact that he was stopping at —— hotel gave him a standing with those whom he addressed, although he was a stranger. It was simply another illustration of what has been said before, concerning the obeisance which this age is rendering the golden calf.

By the afternoon following the day upon which the stranger had arrived in the city, he had all the sketches he wished. The business upon which he had recently entered was comparatively new to him; but he did not think that he could utilize more than one of the plans he had made; at the outside, two would be all he could manage. It was necessary, however, that if anything should occur in a home, that he would be able to disarm suspicion by having visited a number of homes in which positively nothing occurred that could be at all traced to his art.

When he came to the hotel that evening he entered freely into conversation with the clerk on the merits of the different homes. He found out how many servants their owners kept, when he did not already know it. He also knew, after his conversation with the clerk, the homes in which there were grown sons. He learned their habits, and what not? He explained that it always interested him to know how people in different places lived. There was such a diversity in the manner of life in this great land of ours. It was no doubt owing to its every variety of climate, soil, and products.

The next morning our friend took the train to the encampment. He had settled his bill and told the clerk that it was not at all likely that he would return to the city in the evening. He had given the place about all the time he could afford. So that was all that the clerk ever saw of "Peter Gray."

On his way to the soldiers' encampment, the

stranger, who had registered as "Peter Gray" at the — hotel in the city already described, was busy debating whether, during his stay at the encampment, it was best for him to be Peter Gray or Gray Peter, or some person else. Something unpleasant might occur in camp, which would make it necessary to revisit the little city in the valley. (The city in the valley was in the same county as the park to which our stranger was even then going. The county jail was there. Peter Gray knew this; for this reason he was debating whether it was best for him to be "Peter Gray" on his arrival at the park.)

On his arrival at the park he at once made his way to the encampment. Before he left the city he had gone to a wholesale liquor store in the place and had given the proprietor a little bottle of California wine and had handed him a card therewith, showing him where he could get more of the wine direct, without a "middle man," and consequently cheaper. In turn he had purchased a quart bottle of good old rye whiskey. He had added a little concoction from a vial he carried in his pocket. On his arrival at camp he soon got in among the boys. He became thoroughly acquainted with them in a surprisingly short time. They had each of them gotten a little pull out of his bottle to cool themselves after the morning drill, which had just closed before our friend arrived. He interested them with some of his exploits, all of which showed him brave and not overly boastful. They in a short time believed that he was just what he repre-

sented himself to be, a United States detective, after some soldiers of the regular army who had deserted, and who, he had good reasons for supposing, were at the encampment. "I just tell you how it is, boys," he said, "when a man has been a soldier once, he can scarcely keep away from camp life. In my long experience as a detective, I have always succeeded best by frequenting camps."

He showed them some innocent tricks with cards, which, to some of his newly made friends, were entirely new. They had gotten to betting, and had lost in every instance. From cards he went to something else, ostensibly to amuse them and to cause the hours of camp-life to lose their ennui. He had not asked anyone to bet. They had done so nevertheless. Some of them had even borrowed money from less hazardous companions, and had of course lost it. Finally he said, "Oh, boys, I must go." He had gotten up and gone before any of them had time to realize that they were in the hands of a sharper. He repeated this experiment at three or four different places in that encampment of ten thousand soldiers. He had met with no reverses, and all went "merry as a marriage bell."

After he became as well acquainted as he dared in camp, he went down into the grove. He tried to get acquainted with some of the farmers and town-people who had turned out to see the citizen soldiery; but these people he found distant. His quart bottle was empty and he had thrown it away. Per-

haps if he still had had some of its contents, it might have helped him in his work. When the last train pulled out of the station at the grove, the stranger, who had made himself so sociable in the camp, and who had gained not a few friends in the town that showed the strength of iron in every fiber of its make up, was on board. As the train rolled away he had gone to the toilet room and quietly counted his money. He found that he had exactly \$79.56 cents. He felt that he had had a "good day." "All that will come out of it," he added, "cannot be told as yet. I certainly ought to be able to realize something on these drawings."

When he returned to his seat he busied himself looking over the drawings of the interior of some of the houses, the negatives of whose photographs he had in his kodak. He had all of his plans carefully numbered, with the names of the owners, the street where they were located, and everything of interest "in his work."

When the train that bore him from the grove stopped at the junction, the stranger took a train on the other road bound for Philadelphia. From thence he was going to New York, where we shall meet him again.

CHAPTER XX.

A CURE FOR LEPROSY.

"Fame, we may understand, is no sure test of merit, but only a probability of such: it is an accident, not a property of man."—*Carlyle*.

The pilgrim to the town of Bethlehem, if he goes from Jerusalem to the latter place, as nearly every one does, has been impressed with the sight of the large stone building which stands a little to the right of the road which leads to Bethlehem. This large stone building is the Leper Hospital, which was founded by the Moravians some years ago. It has been manned by Moravian nurses, and its running expenses provided for by that denomination. For years the superintendent of that institution has given the poor leper who has been willing to submit to the regulations of the institution, a hearty welcome. Its large, airy halls, its clean, white walls, its good, pure waters, and above all, the kind care of the nurses make this building a haven of refuge to the creature afflicted by this dreadful disease. The conditions which the trustees have found it necessary to impose are simple, few, and absolutely necessary for the highest good of the highest number. The patient who enters the walls of the hospital is not allowed to return to his home again.

If he does he will not be readmitted. This is done for the simple reason that the nurses are glad when they have once cleansed these filthy people. They do not care to repeat the process oftener than they absolutely must. This condition is so easy that one is surprised that anybody afflicted with leprosy should consider it too much to comply with the demand.

Another condition is that all the inmates, when well enough, attend religious worship in the neat little chapel which is fitted up on the first floor of the hospital. The Mohammedans, who compose most of the lepers, are very bigoted, and consider the necessity of attending Christian worship a severe burden.

The lepers in the hospital and outside of it are in every stage of the disease; and of course the duty of attending to their wounds is not a very agreeable one. When once they are in the hospital and thoroughly purified from the filth which their unclean habits have brought upon them, the disease, though never cured, is mitigated in the severity of its painfulness and diminished in the rapidity with which it hurries its victims to the grave. The rapidity with which death usually comes, seems to us to be the only relief of the one afflicted, who is at all conscious of the awfulness of his condition. In short, the sight of a number of lepers huddled together near a city gate, as is the case near the gate on the West side of the walls of Jerusalem, known as the Joppa Gate, or along a public highway, as is the case with the road which leads along the northern side of Jerusalem and from

thence across the Kedron and along the Garden of Gethsemane, is one never to be forgotten.

Octavia Newman had a sweet Christian friend in the aforesaid hospital, a number of months already prior to the time we met the camping party in the Sierras. The two had kept up their correspondence, and Octavia had learned not a little with regard to the self-denying work of her friend in that far-away and historic land. Her friend had been actuated by but one impulse when she went to the Leper Hospital. That impulse was to do the unfortunate creatures good, and study the nature of the disease. She in her enthusiasm had said to her friend Octavia, "Why cannot some one find out a cure to heal this most loathsome of all diseases, and why in the Providence of God can I not be that person? If I do not succeed in discovering a remedy, I will succeed in allaying the pain of those patients who come under my care. Leprosy is not contagious. In all the years that Europeans have worked among them not many have become diseased. Of all the Moravians who lived among them, bound up their wounds, washed their garments, and ministered to all their wants, none of them have taken the malady." This sweet-hearted girl had in her last letter told Octavia that one of the nurses for other reasons than those incident to her work was about to return to Europe. She would perhaps never return. Why could not Octavia come and take her place? She had found the work on the whole just about as agreeable as hospital work generally was. The gratitude of

those whom she was instrumental in relieving of their sufferings, though it was but for a time, made up for the lack of wages. Then, too, the fact that she was permitted to reside so near the Holy City which has been the centre from which the most glorious civilization of which the world has ever known, emanated; that she was actually permitted to walk where the Son of God had walked, were privileges which compensated her for all the self-denial her work involved. "Do not think, my dear Octavia," she added, "that we pine for lack of society in Jerusalem. All the year some of the most learned and wealthiest men and women dwell in or near the city of Jerusalem. For three months almost, the city is thronged with pilgrims, who have literally come from the uttermost parts of the earth. Many of these are men and women of culture, who deem a visit to the hospital a privilege, and who always leave their cards. I have in the short time I am out here made friends with some of the best and most refined people I have ever met anywhere. Then too, the climate is delightful. Since I received your letter written in the very shadows of the Sierras, written in February, when the streams in the east are frozen and the winds howl and sting, I notice that you have learned to appreciate a winter not quite so rigorous as the two we spent on Blackwell's Island together. I could appreciate all you said about the snow-capped mountains in the distance whilst you were writing with the perfume of the richest flowers scenting the air

around you. All this is so like our own experience here, that you would highly appreciate the change.

“Then, too, you must remember that the dells of Sonora never produced love-songs as sweet as those of the vale of Solomon. The breezes of California have never played with the dark locks of Heaven’s inspired prophets. Say what you will, Jerusalem is already dear to me; dear because of its history; dear because of its promises for the future; dear because I am here engaged in the very work which the Master himself did when on earth aye, when on these very hill-sides, and in these very vales. Come to me, Octavia. If you still thirst for fame, here is ample opportunity to gain a deathless reputation. Should you discover a remedy infallible and sure for this awful disease, your name will go down to posterity, and children’s children will call you blessed. Since I am face to face with all the hideousness of this disease, the more I feel that God has ordained that the nineteenth century, which has done so much to lift the burden of sorrow from the shoulders of humanity, will also permit one of her sons or daughters to discover a cure, yes, a *cure*, my Octavia, for this most loathsome disease.”

In this strain the girl went on until Octavia finally came to the last line. Then she dropped the letter into her lap, and said to herself, “Well, the actual experience has not cooled her zeal. She seems all on fire with her mission. What care I for the nonsense she writes about the ‘Holy City’ and ‘the footsteps of the Son of God.’ I would go in a minute, if I

knew that I could be that 'daughter of the nineteenth century' who will discover a cure for 'the most loathsome of diseases.' 'Miss Octavia Newman, M. D., discovered a remedy for the actual cure of that disease which has hitherto baffled the highest skill of medical science.' Assure me of that, my little friend, and I am off for Jerusalem by the next steamer. I wish no higher glory than that."

Then she asked herself about her fortune. The cup of happiness from which she had so eagerly slaked her thirst for the last few weeks since she had received the letter of Mr. Baer, would, she replied to herself, be bitter dregs beside the glory, the fame, that would be sure to become the lot of any person who would discover a cure for leprosy, consumption, or any of the incurable diseases which now hurry off their victims from the stage of action. But how about Mr. Sharp himself? Would he be honest enough to be entrusted with her wealth? Would he send her faithfully the income from her investments? How would it do to establish a hospital with her fortune on the plains of Bethlehem, instead of in New York? It took her only a moment to decide that that was all stuff and nonsense for her. Where would her wealthy patients come from, to pay her for her staff of physicians, which she would employ wherever she would establish a hospital? Could she not take Mr. Sharp along? If anywhere a free and independent woman needed a husband to take care of her, it would be among the wild Arabs of the desert, as she called the people dwelling

round about Jerusalem. Mr. Sharp could find enough to do in his profession in Jerusalem. He no doubt knew the laws of the Turkish empire as well as he knew the laws of Nebraska. Perhaps he could buy a tract of land near the Holy City, as her friend called Jerusalem, and lay it out in building lots, and boom the old town. It had a splendid climate, and good fruits could no doubt be raised there as well as any where. The same posters which he had used to sell Los Angeles property would also do to sell the lots at Jerusalem. Those posters made climate one of the strong incentives for buying. They really sold climate in Los Angeles, Sharp had told her, and threw the land in to clinch the bargain. She did not know that all her plans would work, but she would consider them and discuss them with Mr. Sharp. Should she tell the Dives what she thought of doing? Would they be able to enter into her lofty thoughts and sublime aspirations? She would try them as soon as she had time to discuss the matter thoroughly.

In the midst of her plans she was called to dinner. The three had hardly been seated before Octavia began, "I have had such a delightful letter this morning." She said, "You remember the friend I told you of who has gone to Jerusalem?" (The girls remembered her.) "Well, this friend tells me that there will soon be a vacancy in the hospital. She says a skillful nurse will be required, and that I would just be the person. She talks about the splendid possibilities of the country and the historical associations—"

"And the dirty, greasy Arabs, and the muezzin sounded from the minaret, and the robbers, and the lepers," interrupted Jennie.

"You please allow me to say that she assures me that those people, though they have not had the same advantages you and I have had, Jennie, have better manners than some people in New York."

"Jennie Dives, for instance," said Susan Dives. "It serves you right, sister, you ought to let people finish before you give your comments." Then, turning to Octavia, "And what else did she say?"

"Oh, she spoke of the climate, the society—"

"The society!" again interrupted Jennie.

"Yes, the society," said Octavia, "for you must know that the people are not all ignorant, just as in this country the people are not all refined and polite, even where we would most expect to find them such." Octavia always did hate this Jennie Dives' sarcasm and contradictions. She had once told her that if she had known for whom she was spending her strength and losing her rest, she would have let her die. Of course Jennie had taken this retort from the nurse as a good-humored joke, even though she was not quite sure but that the nurse meant it.

Then Octavia told her scheme as far as she had thought it over, more to get the opinion of the elder sister than to boast of what she hoped to do. If she really had made up her mind she would not have said a word to the girls until the last moment. She had as

yet not told them about the estate which had been willed her.

When she had finished, Jennie Dives looked at her sister, and shutting the eye opposite to Octavia, said, "That is a scheme worthy of the gods! Won't you take me along? I might be able to make an impression on an Arab sheik. I would make a nice queen of the desert. By and by I would travel with Barnum and be his gipsy fortune-teller, and my husband would lead the parade."

Neither Susan nor Octavia paid any attention to this harangue. Susan said, "Your friend went to Palestine from a sense of duty, and from what you have told me now, and on former occasions, I believe her to be a devoted Christian. You would go for fame. Even then, if you were sure that you could discover a cure for leprosy, you would deserve commendation; but if you failed, as all heretofore have failed, how would you bear your disappointment?"

Ah, if she should fail. Octavia had not thought about that. She said: "I usually make up my mind not to fail when I undertake a thing."

Octavia was right in that. She generally did not fail when she once made up her mind to succeed. That was the one redeeming faculty in her make-up. Thus far it had kept her from falling into the hands of her folly, which has already been made so prominent in this narrative. It remains to be seen whether this faculty will be able to hold the field and gain the day for which her ambition is trying to prepare her. Will

not this only strong point, too, succumb to the enemy and fly when all will depend upon it?

Octavia said no more about her scheme just then, for she had not even considered it in earnest. She had only looked upon it as a possibility. As the girls were going from the table Octavia was called for. A woman, very much excited, had called for the nurse to attend her child lying dangerously ill with scarlet fever. In a few moments she was ready, having left her address for any who might call, with the elder of the Dives. Octavia, when asked by Jennie whether she was not afraid to nurse a case of scarletena, replied, "I am afraid of nothing." We have already seen that she was not afraid where fear was most necessary, and a real coward where it required no moral heroism to be courageous.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME OF SHARP'S PLANS.

Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?
O, that the vain remorse which must chastise
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge.—*Shelley.*

About one month after Mr. Sharp had been appointed her attorney by Miss Octavia, he called again at the home of the Dives. Octavia had not returned from the sick-room to which she had been summoned the day she was discussing her plans with regard to the feasibility of becoming a nurse in the Leper Hospital at Jerusalem. We should remark that Mr. Sharp had called upon her once in the meantime, but had not found her at home. He had then promptly written to her, telling her that he had written to Mr. Bear at Omaha, and that he had perfected his plans for transferring her inheritance to her.

When Mr. Sharp found that Miss Octavia was not in, he inquired whether he could see the cook. The chamber-maid, who was also the waiter at the table, and who went to the door whenever one of the Dives girls did not go themselves, went to the servant's room back of the kitchen, and quietly knocking at the door, the cook opened it. When he saw the girl a frown swept over his face, which was as quickly changed into a smile when Mr. Sharp's card was

handed him. He at once told the girl to bring him to the door which led into his room directly from the outside. The girl did not bring Mr. Sharp, but in a very dignified manner directed him where he could find the door leading to the cook's apartment. Sharp received his directions with a smiling face, not because he was amused at the dignity the girl assumed, but because he wished to see the cook in his den, where there would be none to molest or to make them afraid. He wished to have a long chat with the cook.

The Dives did not know that the cook and Sharp had been acquainted prior to the journey to the Sierras. Such, however, was the case. Mr. Sharp had met the cook for the first time in the L. A. jail. When Sharp practiced law he made it a point "to help the unfortunate;" he would go to prison and to judgment with the accused, not, however, for the sake of the accused near so much as for what was "in it" for him.

The cook had been in the toils charged with the crime of having entered a house when the owner was not at home, and taking therefrom a number of "useful and ornamental articles," as he confessed to Sharp after he was acquitted. He had succeeded in proving an alibi, by means of some of his friends, whose oath was about as good as their credit. By the same persons he had proven that the watch and ring belonging to the persons whose house had been robbed, had been purchased by him from a man who was more than suspected, because he had been hanging around the

premises for a number of days before the robbery occurred. This person could not be found after the robbery. Mr. Sharp had visited the cook and had planned his defense after he had heard his statement. He would not have succeeded in having him acquitted had it not been that he claimed to have bought a ticket at the Santa Fe depot for a certain place in company with the ladies who had sworn that they were, on the night of the robbery, in an adjoining town with people who confirmed their evidence, because they were paid to do it, and were no better than they. The ticket agent thought that he had sold the cook a ticket, or at least a man who looked very much like him. With the agent it had been a case of mistaken identity, with the others a deliberate lie. Sharp had boasted to the fat cook that no body else in all the city would have been able to save him from going to penitentiary. We have thought it important to dwell on the manner of the formation of the acquaintance which the two men had.

The cook had come out of his room on the evening of Sharp's visit and had welcomed him heartily. Together the two entered, still holding each other by the hand. When inside of the room and the door closed, the cook said to the attorney: "I have not seen you for a long time. Why did you not come to see me when you called at the house the other time you were here, and that girl that you are after was not at home? I could have entertained you in her absence."

Sharp replied that he had once thought of calling on him to see whether he could loan him some money; but he thought that it would be no use. "To tell you the truth I was hard up just then. I had only two and one-half dollars to my name in cash that night. I have had better times since then, and now I am flush again." He told the cook how he had played with ten dollars until he had lost five, and was afraid to risk the other five, how he had found fifty dollars in the hall of that same place in which he had lost his five.

"I guess you found it?" said the cook half questioningly.

"Yes, I found it near a fellow on the sofa outside of the crowd. He was very tired and sleepy; because he had worked hard, as I myself had seen, so I did not disturb him to ask him whether it was really his or whether he cared that I had it."

"Where have you been since then? You certainly have not gone to the coast in this time and back again, have you?" inquired the cook.

"No, I did not go to the coast, nor is it probable that I ever will go again. My property is about all gone. I have had the worst luck for the last half year I have ever heard of any one having; everything has gone against me. I have some paper yet, but I would give that for half of its face value. It does not amount to over two thousand dollars all told."

"Easy comes, easy goes," said the cook.

"It does not come so easy now," replied the attor-

ney. "I have just taken a trip to Pennsylvania, which, for short, quick work, promises to pay about as well as anything. The fact is, I have already reaped from that little sowing expedition, and if I am a judge, it has just begun to pay."

"Yes? A little real estate scheme?"

"Rather personal property, I think," replied Sharp.

The cook was nonplused. He knew that Sharp was a gambler, a libertine, and would scarcely scruple to do anything mean and unlawful that promised him an income, but he did not degrade him to the level upon which he himself had stood when Sharp found him and helped him out of his trouble. The very horror at his own situation just then was still in his mind, and because he had felt how a criminal feels when at last Nemesis is on his heels, he had made up his mind that he would never again do anything for which he could be apprehended. Could it be that the man who had once defended him against the law had now sunk to the level of the criminal? After these thoughts had gone through his head, he again said, "Yes?"

Sharp paid no attention to this assent which was really an interrogation on the part of the cook. He now fixed his snake-eyes fully upon the cook and whilst the other was being charmed by the glare, he asked him, "Have you met any of the boys since you are in the city?" Then Sharp smiled one of his dog-smiles. His thin lips stretched until he showed a row

of white, grinning teeth. The cook did not understand his question, so he said, "The boys?"

"Yes. The folks who helped you out of the scrape in the West by getting the girls to say that you were with them when you really were going through the house on — Street."

"Great G—— are they here? Then I am lost;" and a visible tremor stole through the frame of the man whose eyes were still staring into the eyes of the serpent whose charm he could not resist.

"You are lost? I should rather say you are found. Man, they are engaged in the best business I ever saw fellows of your stripe engaged in." "Of my stripe? Yes I am still a thief, and a ——! Oh horrors! Why can I not be what I once was? How is it that wherever I go, there someone who knows something of my evil deeds must find me? What business are they in now, pray? They had better watch. There is no desert here in which to hide. What new evil can they be perpetrating?"

"You speak like a saint" was Sharp's sneering reply, "you have turned, have you? I have always heard, that when the devil gets old he becomes a monk. You wait until you are not so goody good as I find you to-night. Perhaps I will take you to see them. I wanted to talk business to you."

The cook thought a while before he made a reply. Could he do anything to withstand the evil impulses which for more than ten years had been upon him? Here in this quiet home of the pure girls he had found

rest from everything but his own conscience. He had hoped that by and by this accuser which seemed more vehement than his enemies, would give him rest. Was there really no use for him to try to build a new life out of the shattered remains of the old? Sharp watched him as this battle went on in his soul. A smile of satisfaction puckered his lips out of the dog-gish grin they had worn, when he saw a look of sullen despair settle upon the features of the poor fellow before him. When he noticed this, he went on: "I had a little job right in your old line. It is out of the city. You can take a leave of absence of two days, and be home in your place without the shadow of a suspicion resting upon you. Who would think of any body in that business behind the neat red walls of this house? Why it looks like a regular convent. If you do not wish to enter the business, your friends will. But do not become too saintly, or you will lose your place anyhow."

(Had only the poor cook defied him as Sharp sat and once more riveted his snake eyes upon him. The cook alas! had gone far from the path of virtue. A cry similar to the one the thief upon the cross made, would have helped him, rescued him, but this he did not make.) He finally said, "Let us hear your business, and if it is not too mean for a white man to undertake, why I am your man."

Thereupon the attorney pulled out a little roll of papers. He took two from the roll and returned the remainder to his pocket. Then, still holding the two,

he reached into his other pocket and drew out a little bunch of photographs. "You did not know that I entered a new sphere—architecture and mechanical drawing" — he said, as he laid the pictures and the papers on the little stand before the cook.

First he took the photographs and holding them in front of the cook he said, "There, what do you think of that for the work of an amateur?" The pictures were good, it is true. One represented a stone house surrounded by a beautiful yard. The house was elevated above the street. Everything about the place wore an air of elegance. The other was also the picture of a house built of stone. It was larger than the former. It stood on a level with the street and had large porches on the two sides which fronted on the streets. Both houses were on corners."

"These two homes are only four squares from each other, in the town of — about two-hundred miles from this city. I was in both of them. I saw enough silver-ware in them to load a two-horse dray. I met the daughter of the codger that lives in this one, pointing to the house standing on a level with the street. She had a thousand dollars worth of diamonds on her hand."

"Why did you not bring them with you, chuckled the cook?"

Sharp paid no attention to the remark. He went on, "Here is the plan of the rooms of this same house. Here are the doors. This is the library. There is a small safe in the room standing here (he pointed

where he had made the Letter S); but it would not pay you to fool any time on the bit of a rat's nest. The man is a lumber merchant and takes his money to bank late every evening. The other house is the one you had better try first. It will be the easier. There is only one man in the house here. The other has several. They are bothersome in your business, are they not?"

The cook replied by asking whether he (Sharp) would like to risk his life for an uncertainty. What assurance had he that after taking the long journey there would be any outcome, with perhaps the exception of the loss of blood, and two or three years in some quiet out of the way place where there is no amusement and nothing but "work! work!" and curses for the pay? "Why did you not try it when you were there? It would have saved you the railroad fare to go a second time, and no one would have suspected you."

Sharp felt the justice of the sarcasm and made no reply; but took up the papers as if examining them. He really felt that he was a coward and had the soul of a goose in everything but innocence, though he tried to impress the poor tool before him with his bravery, wit and cunning. He found that this man whom he considered an easy dupe had really done as his mother-in-law had done some years before, whilst he was masking in the skin of a lion she had discovered the bray of the ass. Without saying anything more he took out the other photographs and putting

these two with them, he put all of them into his pocket. He did the same with the papers. Then he turned his eyes on the cook once more. He gave him a steady, snaky look which finally convinced him that as a serpent he would better flee from the presence of a man who though vile as he, was more cunning. At last he said "You will not go?"

"Not for an uncertainty. By to-morrow evening I can find one-thousand places that promise more than either of those, and I need not go ten miles. Yes, I need not go outside of this house to find at least one."

An idea struck Sharp as this last sentence of the cook left his dry, hot mouth. "In this house!" What a grand possibility! What all it might mean to the man who was smart enough! He said nothing in reference to what he thought; but again putting on his snaky look, he said to the cook, "Will you go for fifty dollars? There is no uncertainty in fifty dollars? If you promise me to do your best to make a good job of the one, and if time permits will try the other also, I will give you fifty dollars. I will take the plunder, and see that I make money out of it. What do you say? Will you do it? Here is the money (pulling out the remains of the \$79.56 he had "made" in that very neighborhood, he counted out fifty dollars.) I mean business."

The cook looked at him a little, then said, "Who will help? One man cannot do it."

"I will furnish you a man. Do not worry. That

will be all right. Will you go? If you don't, there are some who will."

"Will you go with me?"

There was the old sarcasm he had heard from those lips before. Certainly this fellow whom he had once saved from the penitentiary did not take his attorney to be a house-breaker, a sneak-thief, perhaps a murderer. "Yet what else are you, Sharp?" a voice asked him. It spoke out of the depth of his depraved nature. It startled him. He heard it as he used to hear the gentle reproving voice of his now sainted mother. "What else are you, Sharp?" the voice persisted. Yes, "his false pretexts and varnished colors were failing." He began to see that he was on the edge of the last precipice. He realized that he had already fallen; but like some Alpine climber who knows that the rope which held him to his companions has broken and the slip he made was really a fall which landed him at the last precipice that separates him from the last judgment, makes one more effort to save himself from the final plunge and—fails in that effort; so Sharp realized that he had fallen, fallen far, and that this voice in his soul was admonishing him against the last fatal plunge.

He gathered his hat and coat into his arms and said, "So you will not undertake it without me?" and opened the door of the little room, and was gone.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERY SICK.

“Night brings out stars as sorrow shows us truth.”—*Bailey*.

The day the nurse left the Dives with the lady who had the sick child, she went directly to the little sufferer's bedside and remained there until she had the satisfaction of seeing it convalescent. The excitement of the last few months had completely unnerved the poor woman, so that she was not as strong as she should have been when she went. We need not be surprised, therefore, to learn that she herself began to show the symptoms of the same disease. There are some physicians who can never attend a virulent case of scarlet fever without feeling some of the symptoms of the disease. When Octavia first noticed that she was getting a sore throat she took a good dose of belladonna in the evening on retiring; but she had a restless night, in which she dreamt that Sharp had come to her with his usual smile, expressive of satisfaction, telling her that he had transferred the property to her, and that everything was now satisfactorily adjusted. When she had thanked him and asked to know his fee, he had told her that she herself, given to him soul and body, was the only fee he could accept. He had fixed his old snaky-look upon her as he had said this. She

had turned her eyes from him to avoid his piercing gaze. When she looked again he had turned into a deadly serpent coiled beside her on the bench upon which she fancied they were sitting. The serpent's head towered high above her own, with tongue extended ready to strike her. She awoke with a shudder. She found herself feverish, and her throat even sorer than it had been in the evening. From that time until morning she slept only little, restless cat-naps.

That day Octavia's fever grew worse. She realized that her own case had passed beyond her control, and at once had her friend telephone for the ambulance to convey her to the hospital. The superintendent lost no time in sending for Octavia. She was examined and it was found that she had a virulent type of scarlet-fever. She was put into the ward for patients attacked with contagious diseases, and the best medical skill was employed on the case. For nearly two weeks she was delirious, and when at last the fever was broken she was extremely weak. Even the physician who attended her had his doubts whether she would pull through. She herself seemed to realize her condition. She had thought of Sharp, and would have summoned him, but she did not know his address. She felt that if she must die, she would like to leave a message for Sharp, and for her mother and her brother Lee.

"Affliction, like the iron-smith, shapes as it smites." It affects the soul as well as the intellect, the affections

as well as the body. Conscience had, during the first hours of Octavia's consciousness, dethroned the false pride which had so long reigned with an iron sceptre in her soul, and had taken the throne of judgment. It had convinced her judgment that it had erred in allowing her cowardly pride to rob her of some of the noblest impulses of her soul.

Finally the physician said, "Octavia, you are not gaining a particle of strength. You are worrying about something. Unless you dismiss it, you will die. Where is the iron will you used to have when you were a student?" Octavia realized that the doctor was right and at last she made up her mind that it might be too late to send for her brother; she would send for the Dives, who she felt were next to her mother, the best friends she had.

The day after the girls received the telegram they left their home soon after breakfast, and in two hours afterwards they arrived on the Island. The man in the office told them that Octavia had had a dangerous type of fever, and that they usually forbade even the friends of such persons to enter the room where the sick were; but because Octavia was well known, and had made a special request through her physician and he had granted it, they would be at liberty to enter. The girls felt not the slightest fear, and were soon at the bedside of the haughty Octavia. They found her very much changed. Her hair had been shaven and her features were weazened and pinched. The girls

would not have known her, had they not been directed to her bedside.

She smiled a faint smile as the sisters approached, and extended her thin, pale hand in friendly greeting. The girls had taken it in turn, and warmly pressed it. When at last they did try to speak, their voices betrayed the pity they felt. Tears came to their eyes; for when those who have helped us, whether prompted by the kindness of their hearts or because it was in the line of duty, are themselves in distress, their former deeds will come vividly before us.

The nurse was the first to speak. She said: "Girls, I have been very sick. I am still very weak. There is a possibility of my never becoming strong again. I have a few things to say to you, if my strength will allow. Write to my brother and mother, telling them that I realize now that I did not treat them right. I thought myself better than they, which I now see was Oh, so wrong. I cannot tell you how much I feel the sin I did. And Oh, girls, I have reason to believe that your coachman is none other than my brother, whom my mother mourns as dead. There is a possibility that I am mistaken; but he resembles my brother, and when we were on the mountain I saw a knife in his possession, which I am almost certain was once the property of my brother. I would have told you this before; but I did not want you to think that a coachman is my brother. Do not ask him now, girls. If I get well again I will ask him, and if he is what I suppose, I will prevail on him to accom-

pany me to our old home in Pennsylvania. I know my mother, dear old soul, would be so glad to see us. Here Octavia herself wept like a child. The Doctor coming through the ward just then, kindly reminded her that she was very weak and that she would better have her friends call upon her in a day or so, when he had no doubt she would be stronger.

If anybody particularly noticed the Dives girls as they sat in the cars on the elevated road that noon, as they were on their way home, they would have recognized that they were anxious. They spoke in low but earnest tones. They were asking themselves whether it would not be best for them to summon the brother and mother to the bedside of the girl they feared would never rise from her couch again. Had they known the real truth of the matter, they would have known that a dispatch sent just then to the Niemanns, at ———, would have added an additional pang to those which they were even then enduring. Affliction had already laid his horny hand upon the very heart-strings of Lee and his mother, and as we shall subsequently see, was threatening to tear them, at the very time that Octavia was wishing that she might confess her folly to them.

But how about Felix? If he were really Octavia's brother, why not let him know the dangerous condition in which they had found his sister at the hospital?

That day when they arrived at home the first question Felix asked, when he and they met, was

concerning Miss Newman. The girls cast a sharp glance, first at each other, then at him ; but his face showed nothing beyond a kindly curiosity to know how the sick woman was doing. He had learned to realize that she felt that they two were not made of kindred clay. She had always treated him with such dignity and reserve. When she did condescend to notice him at all, she did so with the utmost show of her conscious superiority.

It occurred to them that evening, when Felix had gone to his room, that they had never asked Sharp what their coachman's name really was. He had been introduced to them by the name of Felix, and Felix they had called him ever since. They thought that they would ask him the very next morning what his full name was. They asked the cook that evening whether he could tell them where Mr. Sharp was. That worthy told them that he did not know. He might have gone west again. The last time he had seen him he had told the cook that it was likely that he would go west as far as Omaha ere long, as he had some business to attend to which concerned the folks in the house. He did not ask him the particulars. This remark seemed very strange to the girls; but inasmuch as the cook said he did not ask Sharp the particulars, they did not say anything further just then.

To the surprise of everybody, Sharp came that very evening. He did not ring the bell as he had done the last time he had called, but walked along the side

of the house until he arrived at the door leading to the cook's room. When the girls knew that he was with the cook, they summoned him to the dining room. They told him of Octavia's condition, which information surprised him very much. He said that the young lady had made a favorable impression on him, and that he would cheerfully serve her if he knew of anything that he could do. He said, that he felt sure that the people at the hospital would not allow anyone to see her, if she had scarlet fever. Susan Dives told him that they had been to see her that very day. Then Sharp said, he supposed Octavia would not like if any of her gentlemen friends would call on her. The girls, who had purposely withheld Octavia's request in order that they might draw him out, now told him that quite the contrary was the truth. She had sent a special request to see him next day. Sharp scarcely knew what to say in reply to this information. He left the girls under the impression that he would go the very next morning.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFFLICTIONS.

“ Men die, but sorrow never dies;
The crowding years divide in vain,
And the wide world is knit with ties
Of common brotherhood in pain.”—*Susan Coolige.*

One evening Dr. Nieman was called to see a child near his home, supposed to be suffering with a severe cold, but he found symptoms of scarlet fever. The doctor made his first call of the morning the next day on the little fellow, and found that what he supposed was the matter with him had now actually shown itself, so that even his mother was right when she said, “ Doctor, the boy has scarlet fever.”

For nine long days the doctor was a frequent visitor at the home of his little charge, only to see that his skill was unavailing. The tenth day he saw the “ brief candle ” extinguished, whose flame he had so carefully nursed for so many days. The doctor mourned with the bereaved parents as the little form was carried out into the cemetery, to which we have so often referred in several chapters of this story.

But Lee's greatest sorrow was yet to come. The same fell destroyer, who had so ruthlessly defied the doctor's skill in the case of his neighbor, stealthily crept into his own home and made it desolate. Per-

haps if he had not been so deeply interested in the life of others, he would have earlier noticed the symptoms of disease in his own child. Mr. and Mrs. Nieman had two children. One of them was a girl, six years of age, the other was a boy just half as old to the very day, as his sister. What was queerer still, the birthday of the two children occurred on the same day that their mother's birthday came. Doctor Nieman used to say, that whilst there were five in his family, including grand-mother, there were only three birthdays for them all.

The younger Mrs. Nieman first noticed the symptoms of disease in their little girl. She called the doctor's attention to the child. He promptly took the most diligent care to thwart the disease; but the child became steadily worse. Then a physician from the city was summoned, but he said he could not recommend one thing to be done that had not already been done; perhaps the child's good constitution would save it. The very next day after his visit the little sufferer was released. The "sweet new blossom of humanity," which had so recently fallen from "God's own home to flower on the earth," was early nipped by the cruel frost, and now lay cold and stiff amidst the white autumn flowers, which had been gathered by loving hands to adorn the little bier of the dead child. As she lay there amid the white flowers, she looked like a fresh handiwork of her Creator, and not as having already known human suffering. All of the hearts in that family circle were deeply stricken. The blow

had fallen on all alike. It is true that no heart loves as a mother's heart; but it is doubtful whether Mrs. Nieman's heart bled more freely than her husband's. When the child was dead, the doctor at once sent a dispatch to Octavia, in care of the hospital, informing her of the sad fact, and when the funeral would take place. Much to the sorrow of the three who composed the little family circle at ———, they received a reply the same day, that Octavia was herself indisposed, and would in consequence not be at the funeral of her niece. The physician had received the dispatch, and because Octavia was just then hovering between life and death, he did not let the news of her niece's death go into her hands at all. He answered the dispatch, and did not tell Octavia anything about it for several months. Had the Niemans at ——— known this fact they would have borne their sorrow with greater ease. There is nothing which brings more bitterness in the hour of affliction than the thought that those from whom we ought to receive sympathy have sealed their hearts against us.

The body of the little girl was laid where, in the spring time, the violets bloomed in their richest profusion, and where the birds sang their sweetest the live-long day. They laid her where she so often, in company with the little boy who had preceded her by only a few days, had gathered the wild strawberry from among the graves in the early spring.

After the funeral Lee took up the old burden of other people's suffering. He could now enter into the

trials of others more fully, since death had come to his home and defied his skill in the very midst of his own family circle. We will not dwell upon the fact that everybody in that home from which the little girl had gone felt that death had made "his darkness beautiful," because he had simply plucked a flower from the shores of time and set it to bloom forever in a fairer clime.

We must not for a moment think that this great scourge of childhood, scarlet fever, was satisfied with the victims he selected that winter from among the young. Not only did he take the child from the mother's arms, but he in more than one instance took the mother also, as if he thought that the guardian angels of the little ones needed the help of those mothers in that better world. Mrs. Nieman was one of the first in the neighborhood upon whose vitals the same disease which took her little one fastened his fangs. Perhaps it was because the mother wished to follow her little girl rather than stay with her husband and little son, that the disease held out against the combined medical skill of her husband and his friends whom he called to his aid. Whatever they might do, it seemed to the doctor from the beginning that his wife was doomed. She had fought the symptoms of the disease for more than a month after her little daughter had left them, more because the doctor insisted that she should, than because she dreaded the result. When finally the doctor realized that she could withstand the unequal contest no longer, the

battle was soon over. Mrs. Nieman died as quietly as her daughter had died before her. The last words she spoke were those concerning the future of her little son. "If God leaves him with you, Lee, bring him up as your mother brought you up. So long as your mother remains with you, our little Frank will have a mother. When she comes to me and our Lizzie, you must be a mother and a father both."

Death is always cruel when he enters a family circle. He is scarcely ever satisfied with one victim; but like the tiger of the jungle which, when it has taken one kid from the fold, comes again and again in quick succession, so death will come twice, perhaps thrice, or until but one or two of the family are left.

There are two graves in the little cemetery back of the Nieman home that are visited more frequently than any others. The mother and her daughter sleep side by side. All the long summer day the bees come and go among the roses that grow above those graves. Fit emblems are those roses on the graves there, of the sweetness of the life that still lingers in the hearts and minds of the dear ones that Mrs. Nieman left. Hers was one of those quiet lives which, though little known outside of a narrow circle, fills all that circle with its blessed influences. Though least has been said of it in this account, it is by no means the least of those lives here portrayed.

When Lee's wife died he sent no dispatch conveying the sad news to Octavia. He said to his mother: "She will not think of us. When we lived in peace,

and the cup of our joy was full, we tried to have her share that joy. Now that deep and heavy floods of sorrow have swallowed us up, we will not stretch appealing hands to her. God means that it should be so."

All this time Octavia was still confined to the hospital. She had begun to grow stronger; but the way between her and perfect health was long and full of hard climbs for one so weak as she to make. The Dives girls visited her frequently, and brought with them many little tokens of their regard for her. They assured her again and again that they had written to her friends. They could not understand why they did not hear. Octavia said, "I have been so forgetful of them. They have made so many advances toward me, and have tried so long to have our interests one and our hearts knit together, that they have concluded that this mellowness in my cold nature is owing to my illness. They think it will pass away with coming vigor. It may be so. I hope it will not."

The hair began to grow on Octavia's head; but it was no longer the shower of gold which in her earlier years had hovered around her otherwise plain face. It curled as it came out of her shaven skull, as if in bitter mockery of the custom she had had of taking a hot iron and twisting it out of its natural shape into writhing little ringlets on her head. These little curls, as they came hugging tight her scalp, were soft as down and white as snow. They were the first heralds of the burden of the years that Octavia now began

to feel were, slowly but surely, rolling upon her. Octavia was one of those girls who have no birthdays after their twentieth year is passed. She had always been a "little past twenty" to her friends who did not know her as well as her mother; but now, since her sickness, it seemed that all her accumulated birth days had rolled away at one and the same time and had left her weary and old all at once. There was but one comfort that sustained her soul. It was that she was no longer poor. What if she would not be able to minister to others, one had ministered to her. She then felt that she had not treated Peter True as he had deserved. The man into whose care she had given the collecting or rather transferring of her estate, had written her but once whilst she was in the hospital. It was when the Dives had told him that Octavia wished to see him. He had told her that because of her situation it would be very difficult to gain access to her ward; and that he was very busy just then. He would by the time she became convalescent be ready to hand her the deeds to her property. Hoping to hear favorably and frequently through her friends, he remained her servant. It did seem to her that he was not a very faithful servant, and she resolved that she would live without him, if she lived at all.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"THE BUSINESS."

"You do the deeds."—*Shakespeare.*

One evening about four weeks after our stranger, Mr. Gray, had registered at the — hotel in the town of iron vigor, a man and woman and boy about fifteen years of age stepped off the evening train from the city of Philadelphia, at the station in the suburbs of the city already referred to. From this station to the centre of the town it is said to be one mile and a half. There is a street-railway to the station and beyond it, to the next town six miles distant. The people to whom we refer took the street-railway from this station in the suburbs, where they left the cars which had brought them from the Quaker City. On the corner of Sixth and — Streets they left the car and walked north two blocks. Then the woman cautiously took a picture from beneath the folds of her shawl, and stole a hasty glance at it. She said in a low tone to the man who accompanied her: "Yes, this is the place." The two gave several scrutinizing looks at the premises as they walked by. None of them made any remarks. The boy as well as the rest seemed to know all about the reasons that led them to this particular street and house. The party walked up to the next corner, then turned south and sauntered leisurely four

blocks in that direction; then they turned eastward and walked three blocks. The woman again reached beneath the folds of her shawl and drew forth a picture. She looked at it, then handed it to her husband; because there was no one near them and there was no occasion for caution. They agreed that both of the pictures were true to their originals.

When they had satisfied themselves that they knew their bearings, they again sauntered toward the centre of the city. They were soon in a restaurant and had ordered ham and eggs for three. After they had eaten their supper, it was after nine o'clock. It was too late to go to any place of amusement. The evening was cold, for it was the beginning of January. A gutter merchant was selling soaps for the removal of grease from all kinds of woolen, cotton or silk goods, and lotions for burns, chilblains and all other sores. He had with him an accordion, and when interest lagged, he played and sang. This he kept up until ten o'clock. When he ceased, our visitors walked on. The man said to the woman: "I do not see why he gave us special instructions to visit the smaller house first. I would prefer the other."

The woman replied: "You know Sharp has visited the places in day-time. He has been in both houses and knows what he is talking about. Do as he has directed, then in case of failure he cannot blame you."

Our readers are convinced by this time that the mysterious strangers, who had gotten off the cars in the suburbs of the little city, were sent to finish the

business which "Peter Gray" had so auspiciously begun several weeks before. He had gone to his lodging the night he had been to see the cook, and had succeeded in quieting his conscience without much more ado. In fact of late his conscience did not speak to him as loudly nor as often as it did when he first entered upon a course of wrong-doing. The truth of the matter was he had killed his conscience, or if he had not put it to death, it had become so weak and cowardly that the faults it could no longer prevent in the man's life, it seldom had sense of justice enough to accuse.

The very next day he went to see the friends who had come to the city and to whom he referred when he was speaking to the cook. They were keeping a second-hand clothing store. He had succeeded in persuading these people that the business he outlined would pay, and in order to convince them that he felt confident, he paid for the tickets to Philadelphia and return, and told them that if after an "honest effort" they did not succeed, he would reimburse them. If they succeeded they were to give him the one-half of the net proceeds. His bargain with them and his sending them alone was not so much a proof of the old saying that there is honor among thieves, as it was that Sharp was a coward in every sense of the word. So long as a mean trick did not involve his personal safety he was in the lead, a veritable peer among those of his kind.

The people who were in his employ on this particu-

lar evening had once lived an honest life. The woman had kept a lodging house in her better days; but she had fallen into such bad company and gone so low in the scale of morality, that she had come to New York with her only boy to escape all surveillance of her friends. The man who accompanied her had known her in the west and had followed her to the Metropolis. There they were married, and were now "doing business" as one firm. They kept a small second-hand clothing store to disarm suspicion. Their real intention was to steal in whatever way they could. It had become a pleasure to them to be dishonest. It was easier now to be dishonest than to be honest. They blamed their "hard luck," as they called their improvidence, their shiftlessness and their unwillingness to work. All of the wrong-doers in these chapters were once respectable. All of them had a comparatively good education. They are a proof that education alone will not solve the moral question of a people. Their wrong-doing is just as odious as that of the more ignorant, and is even more culpable.

It was eleven o'clock when the trio again walked by the house they had first visited. The street was quiet save here and there was heard the footfall of some belated man or youth hurrying to his home. They themselves felt like breaking the monotony of the silence by giving a little scream or singing at the top of their voices. If they could have acted it would have been different; but all they could do was to stand in the shadow of the stable and watch the house, so as

to be sure that there were none of the inmates astir, or any late comers who might be still awake, when they "began their work." At last all they could think of was arranged. The town-clock slowly and solemnly struck twelve. It seemed to them that the clock had consumed a whole half hour in tolling the twelve strokes. At last it was done, and they thought it time to begin. They approached the house. There was no moon. There were a few stars; but the heavy January sky shrouded the greater part of the heavens. The night was admirably adapted "for their work." They did not try to unlock any of the doors; for Sharp had distinctly told them that every one of the outside doors had a bar. To unlock them therefore was useless, or to open them in any way without making a great deal of noise, from the outside, was a fruitless attempt. Each of the trio had felt shoes on. When they arrived with noiseless tread at the foot of the porch, the boy was helped to his father's shoulder. From thence he could just reach the hole in the ornament at the top of the post which supported the porch roof. Then, having grasped this ornamentation, he threw his limbs around the post, and in a trice he had reached the top of the roof and was walking noiselessly toward the window. It was down from the top three or four inches. He pulled it down until the top of the upper sash was even with the top of the lower. He knew that the young lady of the house slept in that room, if matters still existed as they did when Sharp had taken the picture. He saw by the gas,

which was burning so low that it made semi-darkness in the room, that she was in bed, and asleep. One white arm, bare to the elbow, lay on top of the cover. He saw that there were no rings on the hand. He noticed that the cover over her bosom heaved and fell regularly and gently. She was in a deep, quiet sleep. But the rings, where were they? He looked about and saw a jewel case on the dressing-bureau. He picked it up. It was locked. He put it under his arm. Just then the girl sighed deeply, and turned in her sleep. That moment the young thief had extinguished the gas and all was quiet. As he stood in the darkness a nameless terror stole over him, that caused his knees to smite together; but in a moment he was himself again, and on his way to the stairs, which he knew were located right outside of the closed door before which he had stood looking at the sleeping form of the young woman. He opened the door. It creaked slightly. He swore an oath which no one heard save He who said: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." In another moment he was at the front door. He unbarred it noiselessly, and turned the key. The door opened. He handed his mother the jewel case. No one spoke a word. In a moment the boy and the man disappeared. The woman for a moment staid outside. The two went directly to the bed-chamber of the owner of the house. It was as dark as night could make it. Then the man opened his coat and it was light in the room. They saw the husband and wife in

bed, and asleep. The man buttoned his coat, and it was dark as before. Then the elder robber stepped up to the bed, reached under the man's pillow and drew gently from beneath it a revolver and a pocket-book. The man's watch had meanwhile been taken out of a little case on the wall, upon the outside of which was printed an owl and beneath it the words: "You sleep, I'll watch." After the room had been cleared of all the valuables they could lay their hands on, they went into another room in which they heard some one snoring. When they were inside the man opened his coat once more, and they saw two young ladies in bed. One was wide awake, though she pretended to be asleep. She had taken her diamond ring off her finger and had slipped it into her mouth just as the two worthies entered. They did not know this. She shut her eyes when the light fell upon her face, and stopped breathing. The boy looked at the man. The man nodded, and the boy moved beside her with his pistol close to her face. He whispered, "Not a word from you." By that time they were ready to go down stairs. The girl had not moved. Great beads of perspiration rolled down her cheeks; but her eyes were closed.

The woman had stayed outside the door only until she was sure the two were upstairs, then she went to the dining room. She opened the folds of her shawl, and the room was light about her. She saw the silver arranged on the chiffonier. She gathered what she supposed was solid and was at the front door just in

time to meet her worthy husband and son as they came hurriedly from up-stairs. They went out without a word and closed the door noiselessly. Then the boy said: "The one girl is awake."

They went to the barn where they had left a satchel, and where they agreed to meet some time before morning, no matter what might happen. In a moment the silver which the woman had stolen was put into the satchel. It consisted of spoons, forks, a butter-dish, a nut-dish, a handsome cake-dish, and a gravy bowl. The watches, of which there were three,—two pretty gold hunting cases which had belonged to the young ladies, a heavy gold hunting case set in diamonds,—some rings and the jewel case which was still locked, together with a purse, the woman took and adjusted about her loins beneath her dress on little hooks, which hung there ready to fasten plunder. Next the little dark-lanterns which the mother and her husband carried beneath their outer garments, and to which we have already referred, were extinguished. All of this was done in less time than it takes to talk about it. The party were ready to start. The felt shoes they still kept on their feet. They took a glance at the house. In the man's bed-chamber just then a bright light appeared. The house was aroused! As the three worthies hurried away they heard a voice call loudly, "Major! Major! Sick 'em Major!" The three knew that "Major" would not sick them. They had given Major, in a quiet, unostentatious manner, a piece of meat which they

had prepared before they left the city of New York as a special gift for any and all faithful watch-dogs which might chance to interfere in "their business." When they had first walked by the house the mastiff of the place had given them a savage greeting. When they were sure that no one saw them the woman had fearlessly approached him, and in a coaxing way held out the meat, which he refused to take from her hand; when she finally dropped it on the cement pavement, the temptation was too much. He swallowed it, and in ten minutes he was a dead dog. He slept in the stable. The horse had already been attended to by the same man who was now calling, "Major! Major!" therefore the dog was not missed. The three had seen the dog eat the meat, and they now laughed a quiet, fiendish laugh, the first audible sound they had made since they had come to the porch just fifteen minutes before.

"We will now go to the other house," said the man, whom the success which had attended them in their first effort had made bold and eager. "It is not yet one o'clock, and all the noise they will make" (nodding to the house from which they had come,) "will not interfere with the next job. What we now have is not worth the trouble. Two hundred dollars will buy the whole outfit. Make hay while the sun shines, or rather before it begins to shine."

"Ought we not to be satisfied?" asked the woman.

The man with an oath replied, that he was incurring the risk, not she. He would do just as he

pleased about it. Meanwhile they had already gone more than a square from the house which they had just robbed. When they arrived at the second place, they found all dark and quiet. They opened the gate. Immediately a large dog sprang out from the porch and barked one or two quick, short barks, then growled savagely. They had seen no sign of this dog early in the evening, though they had looked carefully. The woman was ready for the emergency. She again offered a piece of meat as she stepped in advance of the other two. The dog growled all the more savagely. She could see in the darkness that his hair was bristling. She advanced a step, threw down her meat, went back a few steps, still facing the dog who she knew would spring at her if she would turn. His eyes seemed like balls of fire! As she retreated, the man advanced and thrust her back with a muttered imprecation. He had not gone half the distance between him and the dog before the latter sprang—sprang straight for his neck. The robber was ready for him. He caught his great head between his powerful hands, and at the same time that he clutched the dog's head in his vice-like grip he kicked him in the abdomen. The dog gave a dismal howl and fell from the grip of the thief. That howl had wakened one of the young men in the house, but before he had gotten to the window to speak to the dog the trio were outside of the gate, and when the window opened they dropped as if shot, on the sidewalk. For a moment they lay flat; then when

the young man at the window ceased to speak to the dog which had answered with a low whine, they heard him address someone inside, and shut the window. They did not wait to see whether his inspection had satisfied him or not. They scrambled up from the walk and were gone. Three squares away from the house they paused. The man cursed his luck as he emptied the purse he had taken from under the pillow of the owner of the house where they had been "successful." He handed some of the notes to the woman and boy—how much he did not know—then put the rest with the pocket-book into his own pocket. When this was done they took their felt shoes from their feet and put them into the satchel. Then they separated. The boy and his mother went together; the man went alone and in an opposite direction. Not a word was spoken. We have had our introduction to these characters at their true business. We must leave them now. From their actions we are assured that William Sharp, Esq., made no mistake when he delivered "the business" into their hands.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PLUNDER DIVIDED.

“ Mammon led them on—

Mammon the least erect spirit that fell
From heaven; for even in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific.”—*Milton*.

On the third morning after the passer-by might first have noticed that the little room fronting on — Street, New York City, was closed, the door again stood open, and the woman who kept the place was in the apartment. She and her son had gone westward, after they parted from the man three squares away from the place where they had thought of making their second attempt at robbery, on the night of which we have already spoken. They had struck the railroad about a mile west of the little city, long before anybody was astir in the homes they had passed. They knew just what they were doing. Sharp had drawn a map of the street upon which the second house stood in which he had hoped they might operate. They were to go straight along this road until they got to a railroad. They were then to turn to the right and keep along this railroad until they came to another intersecting this one. Then they were to pass along this railroad until they came to the first station on the

time table, a copy of which he had furnished them before they left the city.

When they came to the station, a flag station near a ware house, they washed themselves from a pump close by, and then sat down in the station. They soon fell asleep and with the satchel which contained their booty, as a pillow and the bench as a bed, the woman slept soundly. The boy lay on another bench with his arm for a pillow. At six o'clock the first train since their arrival awakened them, but that went eastward and they, according to instructions, were to go west. Half an hour afterwards the boy had flagged the westbound train and the two worthies went on board. In an hour after this they were in the capital of the Keystone State. A good breakfast refreshed them. They were decently dressed and attracted little attention. By evening of the same day, they were where they had started from the morning of the day previous. The silver was emptied into a box, and ashes put on top. Then it was carried into the little out-house back of the room in which the people had their second-hand store. They had one room besides in the rear of this one, but the ash-box was kept in the place mentioned.

That same day Mr. Sharp came to see them. "How is business?" he asked, riveting his snake-eyes on the woman and smiling one of the smiles which for all the world resembled the one the dog had smiled at the woman the night before, when he refused her meat. The woman replied that business was fair; but that

her husband had not yet returned, and she could say nothing until he came. She knew he would be displeased if she did. Sharp knew it too. He did not wish to lose the man's "influence" in the future work upon which he had now entered. So he went away, saying that he would call again.

It is now time that we turn our attention to the man who had left his worthy wife and her son on the street, to look out for themselves. We saw that they succeeded in doing this. He was not as expeditious in getting out of the town as they had been. He walked through the principal street and looked for plunder in the shop windows. He saw absolutely nothing "that made it worth while." He had transferred all the notes out of the pocket-book into his little pocket which he had glued to his arm pit. There no one who did not know of its existence would suspect it. The pocket-book itself he had thrown into a pool of water which had accumulated in an abandoned cellar. He knew that he was safe. No one would suspect him. There was no evidence of guilt about him.

When morning dawned he was in the little town where he and the rest had gotten on the street-car the previous evening. When the car came along he stepped on, determined to go back and learn more about the town. He had a good breakfast in a restaurant; not the same in which he had been the evening before in company with his wife. He spent the day about town, saw the sights and walked by the house that he had explored the night before. Two policeman just

then came out. They passed out of the gate and approached him. A fear, groundless he felt, possessed him. For a moment he could scarcely resist the impulse to turn and flee. He knew that of all things, that was the most hazardous to do. They met, and looked him sharply over as they slowly passed; but he paid no attention to them. The police saw his sinister expression, and knew that he was a stranger. After they were past he heard them stop and when he turned they were looking after him. He stopped likewise, turned and walked toward them a few steps, at the same time saying: "Gentlemen, do you wish to speak to me?" The officers looked at each other, and then one of them said, "No." His coolness had saved him.

After he turned the corner he resolved that it would not be safe for him to risk another night in town. A square farther on he met a boy selling papers. He bought one and read an account of the robbery.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

“ Towered cities please us then
And the busy hum of men.”—*Milton*.

The day's life in a great city is divided in periods which are well defined and distinct from each other. The first period extends from midnight to an hour or two before dawn. It is the period when all decent people in their normal condition, are asleep. During this period Felix never went out except on extraordinary occasions. From mid-night to dawn the streets are not deserted. Here and there a policeman walks with measured tread. The gaudily attired who once were pure and had careful plans for life's work, but who long since have fallen from their pure estate, are now abroad to barter their souls and their bodies to whomsoever they may be able. Yonder comes the drunkard reeling along the street with just sense enough left to avoid the policeman. He has come out of the den across the street which, like the mouth of hell, never closes. If you enter where he came out you will find the air thick with the smoke from vilest of pipes and worst of cigars. You will smell there the odors so filthy, that they ought offer an apology to the nose before they attempt to enter. Men and women are there in every state of intoxica-

tion. Faces are seen which reflect whole volumes of brutality.

An hour before the dawn, the wheels begin to turn on the streets, as the milk-man, the butcher, and the baker get ready to supply the great throng of hungry humanity. First comes the milk-man with his mixture of milk and water. With the butcher and the baker comes the odor of steaming breakfasts. The day is begun. The clerk hastens to the shop or store to take his place behind the counter for another day. The streets that two hours ago were almost deserted, begin to be filled with the tide of life. Two streams flow on, the live-long day. One close to the walls of houses, the other on the side nearest the curb. As the day advances the complexion of the stream materially changes. First it was composed of pale-faced men and women, the clerks, and then the mechanics. Now the shoppers and tradesmen from the country and surrounding towns make up the great part of the throng. They for the most part press eagerly along the street. Later in the day come the ogglers and the shoppers who go with little purpose and often with less money. When the sun fills all the streets that cross its path with shadows, then the stream of mechanics begins to surge homeward. After them come the clerks. In the evening the stream is more distinct, better defined, than in the morning; because the clerk and the mechanic seldom return homeward together.

When the stars are out, though their light is seldom

noticed in the streets of our modern cities, upon which the brilliancy of electric lights converts night into day, then begins the last period. With the blaze of the electric light comes the pleasure seeker on his way to the theatre, the lodge, and what not? Then too is heard the wierd music of the gutter musician, the sad tones of whose instrument are often in perfect accord with the sadness of the heart. The thin shawl or coat closely drawn about the shivering form in winter, seldom ever is worn for any other reason than for the fact that no warmer one can be procured. Men may sigh to attract attention, and to make an impression on the credulous, but they seldom expose their bodies to biting cold for any other reason than that they have not sufficient covering.

When the brilliancy of the electric light begins to take the place of the sun, the noise and the roar of the city has largely died away. The lumbering dray that bore the merchandise from ship to store and car, is emptied of its freight, and the weary horses quietly feed in their stalls. Their drivers, often less weary than they, spend half the night in carousing, and on the coming day beat their horses, instead of themselves, for their folly.

It was at this last period of the night that Felix loved most to be upon the street. This is not the best time to study character; but it is the best time to view the giant buildings as they stand side by side, the embodiment of enterprise and commerce. The poet Shirley long since has said, "All buildings are but

monuments of death." They are rather the marks of intense throbbing life. There was nothing that so impressed our friend with the greatness of the Metropolis as the mighty buildings, which contained within their walls more wealth than some of the greatest nations possessed two or three hundred years ago.

The cook had told Felix one day when he was speaking of the great surging crowd of humanity on Broadway, that a man could create, any hour of the day, a perfect jam by simply standing on the corner of the street, and looking upward for a few moments. Felix loved a little fun now and then. The more he thought of the cook's remark, the queerer it seemed. Finally he resolved to try it. One day when at leisure, he sauntered down Broadway. The cook's remark occurred to him when he saw how people elbowed each other in their hurry. Why not try the experiment now? But would not the people have him arrested for a lunatic? How would he be able to rivet the attention of those who would stop, on the space above him, or the building opposite him, sufficiently to escape their notice, or rather their wrath, when once they realized that they were duped? Whatever it might cost him, he felt resolved to try.

He had walked along meditating upon this scheme until he arrived at the corner of a street intersecting the one already mentioned. Suddenly he stopped and gazed intently at an open window on the fifth story of the house opposite him. With his eyes riveted on one spot he was noticed in a moment. The

persons in greatest haste looked sidewise, and slackened their pace. Those not in so big a hurry, stopped, and riveted their attention with him on the opposite side of the street, and on the open window. Some said, "What is it?" Others in their eagerness crowded off the side-walk and stared. Persons at a distance saw them and hurried up to catch a glimpse at whatever it was that attracted so much attention. Felix was beginning to feel uncomfortable, and wished he were out of the crowd. What added to his unpleasantness was the fact that a policeman was making his way from the opposite side of the street to have a look. Felix knew that if the joke would be fixed on him he would be arrested for creating a nuisance. Just as the crowd was becoming impatient, Felix, with his eyes still riveted on the open window, was horrified to see a child suddenly rushing out of the open window. The crowd gave a great cry of anguish. The very intensity of Felix's thought as to how he would get out of his unpleasant position had prepared him for action. He sprang forward and caught the little one as it struck him. He with the child still clasped in his arms was knocked on the ground by the force of the concussion. He had saved a life, when he thought he was perpetrating a huge joke.

The policeman was soon at his side and assisted him in rising from the dirt, and guided him from between the wagons to the opposite side. Everybody was eager to know how it happened that this man should

have known that a child would spring from a window of an eight story building, and just when the event would occur. The policeman, too, was anxious to ascertain the particulars, and asked Felix to tarry. Now that the strain was off his mind, and he was delivered from the crowd whose wrath^h he feared, the man was happy. He willingly entered the building with the policeman who now had taken charge of the child.

The crowd surged to and fro in front of the big house until not only the side-walk was jammed, but the streets as well. The police, standing on the window-sill of the first story, told the crowd that it would be a long time before the particulars would be known, and ordered the people to disperse. The people readily saw the reasonableness of the request, and followed his advice.

Felix had realized that it was time to retrace his steps, just before he undertook his experiment. The Dives had told him in the morning when he asked for his orders, as he did every morning when he took his breakfast, that he would not be needed before noon. It was a pleasant January day, and unless the weather suddenly changed for the worse, the girls had decided to drive out into the Park, and possibly make some calls after a drive of an hour or so.

Promptly at twelve o'clock the cook was ready with the luncheon. The Dives usually lunched at half-past twelve; but they had given orders for an early luncheon that day. After they were through, the bell was

rung for Felix. There was no response. The cook waited a while, then at the suggestion of the elder of the Dives he went to the stable, ascended the stairs, and tried the door of Felix's room. It was locked. When he came down he saw that the carriage had been gotten ready; but the horses had evidently not been fed, for they whinnied eagerly as the cook passed.

He returned to the kitchen, and reported what he had seen. It seemed very strange to the girls. They had been anxiously waiting several days for this drive. The weather had been so unfavorable all the week, that they were eager to get out when at last the sun shone and the wind ceased to blow. They felt not a little disappointed when the clock struck one and Felix had not appeared. They felt quite sure that something had occurred to prevent his return.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHARP'S BAD DAY.

“ Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.”
—*Shakespeare.*

Whilst Octavia was at the hospital, Sharp was having a real good time. He had nothing particularly to do, but think and make plans. He had gotten himself a small office in the upper part of the city, and had put out “ his shingle.” In this office he slept and lived when he was not out on the streets or with “ his friends,” as he saw fit to call some very respectable and some very disreputable people. He had gotten Octavia’s affidavit entitling and authorizing him to receive her papers, before she became ill. This business of Octavia’s was the only business which had come to him in his new office. He had plenty of time for scheming, and he did not a little of that kind of business.

About this time Sharp’s funds were getting low. He still had the watch set with diamonds, which had been brought from the town of iron vigor. He resolved to pawn or sell it. He had not heard anything about the theft since it had been committed, and he felt that it was safe to “ get an advance on it, by putting it in soak.”

He went to the pawnbrokers and said to the clerk: "Here is a good time piece which was left me for a fee in helping a man out of a scrape." At the same time he drew out a card with his California address and handed it to the clerk." I have a watch, and I do not care to take that with me to the 'Golden State,' so I thought perhaps I could sell it. What will you give me for it?" The clerk looked at it with a glass for some time. Then he took it to the proprietor, and they two looked it over. Sharp became anxious. It was a question with him whether he had not better go without his watch. They might be seeing something in the watch he had never seen, and be knowing more about where he got it than he at first thought. At last the clerk returned, and to his infinite relief, said they would give him one-hundred dollars for it. Sharp was glad to get that, but he tried hard to secure more. The money was finally accepted and he was gone. He called on his friends and after some conversation asked them how the funds from their last business were. They told him, that whilst there was still some left, they were not by any means ready to start into the Loan and Safe Deposit business. Sharp said: "Well, how would you like to begin operations in a nice, quiet part of the town? I think I know a place not ten miles from the spot where we are now sitting, which will pay for the effort required, about as well as anything outside of cleaning the cobwebs out of a bank vault, and that you all know, is a risky business."

"We never tried that," replied the elder of the men.

"I do not think you would like it, if you were to try it; but this is private, strictly private, and unless I am greatly mistaken, will be unattended by any serious risks. If you think you are ready to go into it in the course of a week or two, I will tell you the place."

"The cops in this town are all eyes," said the younger of the men.

"Yes, the police are awake here, but you need not tell them anything of your work. Leave the results in some out house, or if necessary, bury them for a while on the premises, and then take them home by day. That is much safer any way than lugging the goods home at night, when they are of considerable bulk, as these would necessarily be."

Sharp went on to tell to what the pile which he wished them to put into some safe place, in his judgment, would in all probability amount. He said some little charity might be necessary for the door-keeper; but a little would satisfy him. He himself would not wish much of the net proceeds. When he finished he found them very eager to enter upon the "little business" at once; but he told them that he had not mapped out the plans sufficiently. They must wait a day or two.

It was after ten o'clock when Sharp quit the place on W—— street on his way to the elevated road. He had the one-hundred dollars in his vest pocket. In addition to this he had the diamond stud, and his own watch, which his wife had bought him with the money

she had earned with her needle. She had given it a Christmas gift to him the Christmas before he eloped with her. We have a number of times already said that Sharp was a coward, and we have proven it on different occasions. We need therefore only remind our readers, that Sharp was a coward, and although himself a thief, he was afraid of thieves.

He was walking along briskly, for he was afraid, and it was cold. When he got to the corner of Christopher and Bleeker streets a man stepped out of the shadow of a door-step behind which he had been concealed, and rushing in front of him he leveled a revolver at him, and said, "Throw up your hands, and be — quick about it."

Sharp had had his hands in his pockets to keep them warm; but his thin, tapering fingers and bloodless palms soon were stretched high above his head, whilst his teeth began to chatter. The highway-man realized that the victim before him was game, so he took his revolver in his left hand and went through Sharp's pockets with his right. First he took the watch, the Christmas gift of poor Minnie. Her pale face and beseeching eyes came before Sharp for an instant as he stood there on the street with uplifted hands. For a moment he saw that face; but it was forgotten when the thief reached into Sharp's pocket and hauled out the wad of bills, the proceeds of the sale of the watch set in diamonds. Sharp groaned as the man stuck them into his pocket. Then came the stud, which also changed ownership. In spite of his

fear Sharp was getting angry. He swore a dreadful oath which made the highway-man start. It was not because he was unaccustomed to hear men swear, but because there was a familiarity in the tone of voice which the man recognized. Perhaps it was because he recognized the voice, or because he felt that he had all that was worth having, that caused him to straighten himself and look at his victim. Sharp also scrutinized the robber. He was a short, chunky fellow. His fat face was surmounted with a big black beard which Sharp could not tell from a natural growth, which it was not. The fellow wore a cap fitting his head closely. It came down over his ears and almost to his eyes, so that one who would not have been as badly scared as Sharp was, could have told the color of the hair on the man's head.

After looking Sharp full into the face a moment, he said: "Be gone, you knave." Stepping aside he let Sharp pass on. "Don't look around," he called after him, "or it will be your last look."

When Sharp did look around, which was as soon as his fear permitted him, the thief was gone. Sharp met a policeman about a square away from the spot where he had been robbed, and in a loud and angry tone of voice began berating the officer because he had permitted a man to be robbed under his very nose. The policeman tried to get the particulars; but Sharp was almost hysterical in his conduct, and the officer finally left him in disgust, resolved to try to do the

best he could to find the thief. It is needless to add that he did not find him.

When Sharp paid his car fare he found that he had fifty-five cents less than he had had that forenoon. Fifty cents of this had gone for two much needed meals. What should he do? He thought of the advisability of borrowing from the cook, or—he hesitated to think the thought fully in his own soul—perhaps he could hold up some lady on the Avenue, for he felt that he must go up that way in a day or two. Sharp would have held up any man or woman his cowardice would have permitted; but that sin he never committed, simply because he was afraid to try.

That night Sharp crept to his room like a whipped dog. He felt miserably ashamed of his conduct in the hands of a thief, and then at the manner in which he ranted at the policeman. He tried to sleep, but he could not. Finally he had composed himself and was about to doze away when he saw standing, as he imagined, just outside the window toward which his bed faced, the form of a woman. She had the face of Minnie, the wife whom he had as yet not divorced. She gazed upon him with a sad, solemn look. The lines of care which had impressed themselves on his memory the last time he had looked upon her, when he was driven from her and her mother's presence, had faded from her face, and instead of them one of indescribable peace had taken their place. Her golden curls were parted from her pure, white face and hung in wavy lines upon the snowy white garment which en-

tirely concealed her form. Yes, he was awake. He was not dreaming. He saw the outlines of the window behind her, through her, it seemed—on the opposite side of the street. He shut his eyes to hide the vision of beauty from his guilty soul. In a moment he opened them again, and the form was still there. It was Minnie! He could not be mistaken. Cold drops of sweat oozed from the pores of his clammy skin and stood in great beads on his face. His teeth again chattered as they had done a few hours before when he had seen that face on the street, not as distinctly, as terribly real, as now. From the very first day he had met her until he had tried to poison her and her mother, and his own sweet baby, every scene of their life came before him; and still the pretty, sweet, though awfully solemn form stood there in mid-air before his window. He felt the marrow in his bones chill as one scene after another of his awful duplicity, viciousness and guilt came before him. He could stand it no longer. "Great God!" he fairly screamed, as he jumped from his bed and rushed toward the window.

When he became conscious he found himself lying on the floor in front of the window. His limbs were stiff with cold, and his fingers numb. The vision in front of the window was gone. He crawled to the table and with difficulty struck a match and lit his lamp. In sheer desperation he lit a cigar and smoked, sitting on the edge of his couch with his blankets wrapped about him. Before he lay down, the cold gray dawn had crept into his room and dimmed the light of his lamp.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FROM JEST TO EARNEST.

“ There is a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”

Several of the evening papers that night contained a notice of the events described in a former chapter. Our readers can best learn the particulars by perusing one of the accounts which we have seen fit to transcribe. It is as follows:

“ A MODERN MIRACLE.

A CHILD SAVED FROM BEING DASHED TO PIECES :
A* YOUNG MAN IS KEPT GAZING ON AN OPEN
WINDOW IN THE FIFTH STORY OF THE —
BLOCK, CORNER OF BROADWAY AND—
STREET, UNTIL HE SEES LEAPING
THEREFROM THE FOUR-YEAR
OLD CHILD OF MR. ABRA-
HAM, WHICH

He Saves from Instant Death by Catching It
In His Arms.

“ This morning when Mr. Abraham went to his store to attend to his daily tasks, his little four-year old boy, Benny, who is a great favorite of the entire family, and especially of his father, begged to be taken to the store. The father finally consented with the under-

standing that the nurse should come before luncheon, and take the little fellow home. The father, after giving some directions to the shipping clerks, was called to the fifth story of the building. The little boy ran with him wherever he went. He had insisted on taking his little dog, Jib, with him. This fact nearly cost the child his life—would have cost it, we may add—had not a higher Power intervened.

“Whilst Mr. Abraham was busily engaged on the fifth story, as already indicated, a young man was standing on the corner opposite the wholesale house, staring at the open window in the room of which the child, the father, and several clerks were engaged. The passers-by on the street below noticed the young man standing as if riveted to the spot, staring at the window. This strange circumstance attracted attention. Every son and daughter of our common mother, Eve, has a vein of curiosity in their make up. This vein of curiosity sometimes overspreads and entirely paralyzes the other faculties of the soul. It seemed to have done so in the case of most of the passers-by at the corner of Broadway and ——— Street this morning. It was not long before a large crowd had gathered around the young man who stood gazing spell-bound at the open window mentioned. To all the questions which the crowd asked of him and each other the young man answered never a word.

“A policeman, who from a few rods away, on the opposite side of the street, had first noticed the young man looking up and down the street, as if in search of something, and then saw him finally rivet his gaze on the window mentioned, wondered what it all meant, and kept his eye on the stranger, who wore a white, broad-brimmed hat and black suit. Finally the crowd became so large that it threatened to create a

jam. The carriage containing the nurse of the child which was so miraculously preserved from death, had just driven up to the store for its charge, when the policeman, who was crossing the street, intent on dispersing the crowd, and finding out the cause of the queer conduct of the man who had first attracted his attention, heard a loud cry from the crowd that was staring upwards. At the same time the young man rushed into the middle of the street, which happened to be clear in front of him, and caught the little boy, who flew straight into his arms, as if that had been his objective point from the start. The force with which the little one struck the breast of the young man caused him to stagger backwards and trip and fall. By this time the policeman was at his side. He helped him up out of the dirt, and relieving him of his little charge, asked him to accompany him into the building.

“ When the father, five stories above, realized that his child, in wildly chasing its dog about the room had run toward the open window and had been unable to change its course, had actually leaped into the street forty-five or fifty feet below, he was with difficulty restrained from leaping after it. He could scarcely believe that it had been caught by some one below. It is needless to say, that the elevator went too slowly for Mr. Abraham as it bore him down to his little son, whom he found seated on a bale of goods, with the policeman, the rescuer, and all the clerks and book-keepers of that floor around him. What seemed almost incredible to all was the fact that outside of a little nervousness, the child was practically unhurt. When the little fellow saw his father he, half crying and half laughing, said, ‘ Papa, me and Jib fled out of

the window.' It is needless to add that the dog had not 'fled.'

"Mr. Abraham embraced his child as if it had come back to him from death, as it virtually had done. Not being overly strong himself, he fainted. For a time it was thought that the father would sustain more injury from his child's fall than the child itself; but he was soon restored to consciousness without having experienced any serious effects.

"The young man, who is the real hero of the occasion, when asked the cause of his strange conduct, in standing for fully five minutes staring at the window, could give no satisfactory explanation. It seemed to all who had witnessed the strange proceedings, that the whole was little short of a miracle. The young man was evidently directed to the spot at the proper time to save the child from being crushed by the impetuosity of its own fall on the street below.

"Our reporter has been unable to learn much of the instrument of this strange deliverance. He gave his name as Felix. (We have not learned whether this is his Christian or family name.) The young man was in haste to get away. He said he had an engagement at twelve, and as it was then already one o'clock, it was high time that he be gone.

"Soon after the young man had left, the father realized that he had not obtained his address. He hereby earnestly requests that the young gentleman make known his full name and address, inasmuch as he is unwilling to lose sight of the rescuer of his child."

Felix lost no time in getting home and rehearsing his story. When he had ended, Susie Dives asked: "But, Felix, how came you to stand on the corner of the street, and gaze at that particular window, and

how came a crowd to collect around you? What was the attraction? I cannot understand why you should stop and gaze with nothing more to look at than you had; nor do I see why a crowd should imitate your silly example. Explain yourself, if you please."

Felix blushed scarlet as he said: "Silly is the proper word to use in the explanation of what I did." Then looking at the cook, who had come into the parlor where they all had gathered, when Jennie first announced Felix's arrival, he told the ladies how the cook had once told him that notwithstanding the eagerness to go which everybody manifested on Broadway, anybody could get a crowd around him in a few moments by simply stopping and staring—staring at nothing. He said he had resolved to try the experiment.

The girls looked at each other a moment as if trying to decide what to think of anything so silly; but as the whole affair had terminated so fortunately, they concluded to join in the hearty laugh which the cook had begun at Felix's expense. The cook's face, when he laughed, was in itself sufficient to provoke mirth. If it is true, as Carlyle says, that "Laughter is the cipher key wherewith we decipher the whole man," then the cook, as he stood that day in the parlor of the Dives, holding his fat sides, convulsed at the joke which he himself had planned and Felix had so admirably perpetrated, in his laugh held out the key which any student of character would have taken and unlocked therewith the soul of the man; but there was

no person there just then, bent on such a study. When the cook laughed, his mouth, which, when his face was sober was nearly entirely hidden by the great bunch of fat that formed his chin, and by his fluffy cheeks, came into prominence. His eyes, because of the effort to distend his mouth, were then entirely concealed by the fat which pushed over them. At the same time there came into his face the shadow of an emotion that was not born of mirth, but rather the result of some hidden sorrow, some awful memory.

"But whose child did you catch from the jaws of death?" asked Jennie.

Felix gave the man's name, when the girls at one and the same time shouted: "Well, I declare! Mr. Abraham's little Bennie!" Susie added: "Felix, they are our neighbors. They are just the nicest people on the Avenue. We know them. The mother and daughter sometimes call here. There are only four of them, Benny, Louisa, and the father and mother. I guess we won't continue to have you for our coachman very long any more. Mr. Abraham will surely give you a better position in his store. He does a large wholesale business, and employs quite an army of men. We will be sorry to lose you; but call on us for a recommendation if you need one."

Just then the clock on the mantle struck three. "I guess we must give up our drive to-day," said Jennie. Felix insisted that the girls should not think of it. He had not had lunch, it was true; but he did not feel at all hungry. He could easily wait until dinner at

six. With this he started for the stable, and exactly ten minutes afterward by the clock, the coach stood in front of the house. The girls were ready, and in a moment more they were gone; but not to the park. They paused in front of the home to which the little boy and Jib had been brought an hour before, and both of the girls had quit the carriage and gone to the door of the pretty home before Felix had realized that he was in front of the house of Mr. Abraham, whose child he had been instrumental in saving from death.

The girls found everybody happy. The mother and daughter were not a little surprised to learn that the rescuer of their little Benny was in the employ of the Dives. Susie told them, that Felix, whilst he was acting as coachman, was well educated, had traveled much in his time, and was not an Irishman, but a Pennsylvania Dutchman, as he himself declared, although he had not resided in that state for a long time. Nothing would do, but the mother and daughter must have an introduction to "the noble young man," as they saw fit to call our friend. Felix with not a little reluctance came down from his seat, fastened his horses, and was ushered into the parlor. He answered all the questions modestly, but intelligently, until he was asked the old embarrassing one, of how he happened to be standing at the corner and watching the fifth story window? He had two women with him to help him answer that question. When Susie saw the blushes mantling on his cheeks, and caught his eyes helplessly wandering to hers, in appealing

looks, as much as to say, "This is too bad," she at once came to his rescue. She said: "Felix scarcely knows how he did come to stand there. It is all so strange, is it not?" The ladies admitted that it was strange, to say the least, and so you, kind reader, will admit.

It was four o'clock when the little company left the house with pressing invitations to call again, and to be sure to have their "friend" come with them. They made a few more calls on the Avenue, then they returned to their own home.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FELIX QUILS THE DIVES.

“ There is an hour in each man's life appointed
To make his happiness, if then he seize it.”

—*Shakespeare.*

After the call which Felix so unexpectedly made on Mrs. Abraham and her daughter the day the girls called to extend their congratulations at what seemed to them an almost miraculous deliverance, a friendship seemed to spring up between them and the Abrahams. Only a few days passed before Mrs. Abraham and her daughter returned the call. Of course Felix was a fruitful topic of conversation not only on this occasion, but ever afterwards when the ladies met. In fact there were not very many stupendous events in the lives of the women, and when a great event did occur they made the most of it. If they would have had a family of children to look after, it would have been different. Other people's children and cares did not enter their lives very materially, so they had plenty of time on their hands. To say that the Dives did not think of anybody but themselves, would be doing them a gross injustice. They were kind hearted and all they lacked was some one to show them how they might be more useful in the world than they were. They did support with their means the chari-

ties of the church of which they were members; but they gave of their affluence, and did not feel that they were doing much. To all invitations to attend guilds and society meetings they had but one answer.

But to return to the subject of conversation with these ladies whenever they met, for more than a year after Felix had saved Benny from an early death, the young man, as already said was a topic of conversation of which they never wearied. Where was his home? How came they to bring him with them to the city? These and similar questions they asked the Dives again and again. Only ten days had passed since Benny "fled" through the air, and the girls had seen each other oftener than during ten years before; but Mr. Abraham had not called as yet. He as a usual thing thought well before he acted. Mrs. Abraham asked him several times why he did not call on Felix and engage him in his business. To be a coachman was not the thing for so promising a young man as he seemed. At last he made up his mind to have an interview with the young man. Before eight o'clock one morning, the door-bell at the Dives' home rang. The girls were surprised to see when the card was handed them, that their early caller was Mr. Abraham. Holding the card up before Felix who was sitting at the table eating an early breakfast, because he had some special duties that morning, Susie Dives said to him, "Felix, that means you are going to leave our employ."

When Susie came into the parlor Mr. Abraham rose

and after bidding her good-morning in a most cordial manner, he told her, that he had really not called to see her. Felix was the person whom he wished to see; but as he never did business in an underhanded manner, he thought he would first make known his errand to the girls. He had come with a view of calling the young man into his employ, as a means of expressing his gratitude for what he had done for his son, Benny. Miss Susie said, that however loath they might be to see Felix quit their home they felt that he was fitted for more responsible positions than that of coachman, and that for his sake they would be glad to have Mr. Abraham offer Felix the opportunity to rise. When Mr. Abraham asked where he would be able to find the young man, Susie told him that she would call him into the parlor.

When Felix was ushered into the parlor, Mr. Abraham looked him over from head to foot carefully, almost calculatingly. That was the habit which he had practiced many years already when anybody came to him for a job, and now that he went after some one to give him a job he did not think of what he was doing. He had returned Felix's greeting meanwhile. After the inspection, he said to Felix: "Young man, you know that I owe you a debt of gratitude, to say the least, and since I am not a man to leave my debts unpaid longer than I can help, I came to see you this morning. I know that I cannot pay you what I owe you as I pay for a case of silk handkerchiefs; but I can at least show you that I am grateful. What can you

do besides driving horses and washing carriage wheels? I could give you that work in my employ, but if I can give you nothing better, you might as well stay where you are. I think that you will acknowledge that you cannot get better masters than you now have." Without waiting for a reply, he continued, "Do you know anything about business? You saw, no doubt, that I am in the wholesale Gent's furnishing business? I am about to lose my best book-keeper; but I guess you don't know anything about that business. Do you?" Here Abraham stopped to get his breath, and to give Felix a chance to reply. It really was the first time that a reply would be of any weight to either Abraham or Felix. Perhaps that was the reason that he had not granted him the opportunity before.

Felix candidly replied that he had no practical knowledge of book-keeping. He had a good, common school education which he had gotten before he went out into the world, and that he had supplemented this by attending night-school in Chicago, and in Denver, during the greater part of two winters.

Mr. Abraham replied: "Well, we will see what your theoretical knowledge is worth. Come to my place of business next Monday morning at eight. I will give you the place which will then be vacant in my office. If you suit you will get \$100 per month, with the possibility of rising in wages, if not in position. The men who hold positions below you will perhaps not like that an 'outsider' comes into the place which might have been filled by a promotion, but that is my busi-

ness." When Mr. Abraham had said this, he repeated, "On Monday at eight," took Felix's hand, shook it warmly, and was gone.

When Felix came into the dining room, Susie Dives said: "Felix, we are nearly consumed with curiosity. What is it?"

Felix frankly told the girl who, he felt, had an interest in him.

She replied: "We knew that he would offer you a position; but we did not dream that it would be quite so good as that."

Felix continued the coachman of the Dives until Saturday evening. He had engaged a room in a private boarding house on the Avenue, a few squares from the Dives. The family had failed in fortune, and the husband had died. The widow and her son were taking care of themselves.

When Monday morning came, Felix was up bright and early. By eight o'clock he stood in front of the office-door of Mr. Abraham, patiently waiting until the book-keepers came and opened. The first man who came, Felix asked whether Mr. Abraham had come. "That gentleman," said the man spoken to, somewhat condescendingly, "has not arrived yet. We generally attend to the business here. What can I do for you?"

"I will see Mr. Abraham, if you please," replied Felix.

"All right, my boy. He will probably send you to me or to the fellow just coming there," (pointing to

the other book-keeper who was just entering the door) "or perhaps to one of the clerks," he added significantly.

Just then Abraham entered the establishment, and walking up to Felix, he took him warmly by the hand and said, "Glad to see you on time, young man. Walk in," leading the way into the office. "That will be your place," he said, pointing to a stool at the desk next to his own. Then he introduced Felix to the two gentlemen who had preceded Abraham and Felix into the office. "Mr. Slogan and Mr. Jones," indicating with a look who was Mr. Jones and who Slogan, "this is Felix —, who takes the place of Mr. Black, who left us on Saturday."

The two men acknowledged the introduction, then made faces at each other, which grimaces Abraham did not see, but Felix did.

Soon Felix was busy at work crediting drafts which had come in abundance that morning, in payment of goods. He asked no questions, but kept on hunting the names of the customers and entering the amounts to their credit, as if he had had those books in his care for a score of years. Finally one of the two men had occasion to go to Felix's desk. He looked at the entry the latter was just making, and then turning to the other he nodded his head very approvingly. Abraham saw it and smiled a smile of satisfaction which lit up his large, round, German face like a full moon.

Things went on very satisfactorily in the office. He treated the men who had been in Abraham's employment with respect, and they in turn could not help but do the same; but the shipping clerk on the first floor, who had confidently expected to go into Abraham's office when a change would occur, was green with envy. This man made up his mind that he would play a little trick on the "cowboy," as he delighted to call Felix. One morning before the book-keeper came, he took a piece of shoe-maker's wax, large as a hickory-nut, and flattened it out on the three-legged stool on which Felix sat when at work. He knew that in all probability Felix would pull his chair out from under the desk to which he always shoved it when he left his work, and never looking, would sit down upon it. After a while the wax would get warm and then it would stick him to his business close as wax can. To his horror, when the book-keepers came in next morning after he had fixed the wax, whilst Felix was hanging up his ulster and the clerk was already beginning to grin in anticipation of the fun in store, Abraham himself pulled out the chair, and fixing his eyes on the ledger on the desk, sat on the stool in perfect composure. He leafed over the entries Felix had been making, admiring the penmanship which seemed to improve with each day's writing, as well it might, for Felix practiced assiduously each evening in his room. Finally shutting the book approvingly, he said to Felix, at the same time keeping his feet on the rung of the stool and attempting

to rise, "Here, young man, is your place." But there was the report of goods tearing, and when Abraham finally got away from the chair there remained a piece of the seat of his pantaloons, the size of two hands spread to their utmost extent, on the stool, and Mr. Abraham, reaching back to where that cloth had been, felt the smooth texture of his silk underwear. To say that he was mad, would be stating it mildly. In a moment the truth flashed upon him, and then his anger changed, and he too laughed with the three in the office. He read the faces before him, and saw that they were innocent. He looked through the glass with which the office was enclosed and saw that all the clerks on that floor were convulsed with laughter. He knew that they were in the joke. The shipping clerk alone, with a face as red as a beet, was walking toward the back part of the store. Then turning to Felix, he said: "The wax was evidently intended for you. Well, Mr. —," mentioning the shipper's name, "will be relieved from the new responsibility he has taken upon himself, in trying to have people in this office stick to their business like that." Then he stepped to the telephone and ordered his carriage. Next he called the shipping-clerk and said to him: "Get your pay this evening. I will not need you after to-day. You are over-worked and need rest." That evening the clerk was paid and given five dollars extra, as Abraham said, for the special work he had done that day. The young man did not deny that he had put the wax on the chair, because he

knew that it was useless. From that time Felix was never annoyed by anybody in the establishment.

We cannot close this chapter without commenting on the good fortune that had attended Felix ever since he had come from California. Not only had he won the friendship of the estimable ladies in whose employment he had been brought from the Pacific coast, but he had won the best position that Mr. Abraham had in his power to give just then. It was luck, mere foolishness, which had opened the latter place to him; but, if he had spent his evenings as thousands of young men do who have opportunities such as Felix never had, he would not have been able to fill the place which luck, or whatever we may choose to call it, opened for him. It has been well said, opportunity has hair on the front of her head, behind she is bald. If you do not catch her in front (that is before she passes,) you will not be able to hold her.

CHAPTER XXX.

FELIX AND SHARP IN THE HOME OF THE DIVES.

“ When change itself can give no more
’Tis easy to be true.”—*Sir Chas. Sedley.*

Three months after Miss Octavia Newman, M. D., last crossed the threshold of the dear old home on Fifth Avenue, she entered it again. She would scarcely have been recognized by those who had only a casual acquaintance with her. She was completely changed. Her hair, as we have already said, was thin and white. Her face was still pale and what was more, deep lines which coming vigor and growth in flesh would be unable to remove, had planted the evidences of care and suffering beneath her eyes and round her mouth. Her form was still erect and dignified. The ambition which had held her head erect for years had not completely deserted her. It seemed to grow to its old dimensions with the strength of her body. With it grew her former pride. In less than three months after she had left the hospital, she seemed her former self. She had not heard from home, and she did not care. She now rather played the role of the injured party. They did not care for her, why should she worry about them. They had been so long apart and she had experienced so much since

last they had things in common, she feared that it would be impossible for them to enjoy each other's society.

When the attending physician told her one day, as she visited the Island, that during her worst illness he had received a telegram from her brother, informing her of the death of his little daughter, she felt that she should write and make a full explanation of why she did not attend the funeral. She would write to him, and that soon. But she put it off for several days for want of time, and then when she felt that she had time, she asked herself, even when she had taken her pen in hand, why she should write now, when several months had already passed since the child's death. It would only open the wounds afresh in their hearts, now that time had begun to heal them.

One evening toward the close of winter she sat in her room by the radiator from which the soft rays of warmth were coming, she thought of the kindness of the Dives in thus giving her a home when she was in reality giving them nothing in return except a little medical advice now and then. She made up her mind then and there, that however agreeable the life she was now living (the Dives had insisted that she should not go out to care for the sick all that winter) so soon as she received her property she would insist on compensating them for their kindness. She felt that whatever she might do after she received her inheritance, until then this home was the very best place for her. The book on hygiene which she had been reading fell from her hand into her lap, and be-

fore she knew it she was dreaming. She again dreamt that Sharp came to her. He smiled the smile which he always had when he felt that things had gone well. He had in his hand several envelopes. These, after giving her a cordial greeting, he handed to her, saying, "Here are the documents at last. It took a long time to secure them; but the will had to be probated. You will find the deeds to the ranch and to the property in the city both." She dreamt, she took them both out of his hand, opened them, and read them hastily. Then she had asked him the same question with regard to compensation that she had asked him in her dream before she went to the hospital. His reply was the same that he had then given. He told her that she herself, given to him soul and body, was the only fee he would accept. Again she saw herself turn her head away to avoid his piercing gaze. When she looked around he had as on the former occasion, turned into a deadly serpent with his head towering over her ready to strike his poisonous fangs deep into her head and heart. When she awoke from this dreadful dream it was to answer the summons of Jennie Dives. She had come to tell her that Mr. Sharp was in the parlor inquiring for her.

Felix, who we have seen, left the Dives soon after the holidays to enter the store of Mr. Abraham, had come over to see the girls that evening. Ever since he left the employ of the Dives he looked upon them as his best friends. Miss Abraham too, looked upon him as a friend of their family. She one time said to the Dives girls: "No matter whether Felix is rich or

poor, whether he belongs to an old Pennsylvania Dutch family whose ancestors came over here many years ago, as you intimate that he does, we do know that he saved the life of our Benny, and that is enough. Papa says he intends to make him his head book-keeper, if not his private secretary. Papa says that he ought to have a private secretary. He gets so many letters which contain questions and information which ought to be confidential with him alone, and not known to everybody in his office, as is the case now."

So Fannie Abraham's little saucy looking mouth ran on, speaking the praises of Felix and prophesying his future greatness, until the Dives themselves fell in love with Felix. They felt sure that that was what Fannie was doing, or had already done, whether she knew it or not. It might be that this little lady did not know that she was yielding her heart to a man who had never sued for it, nor had even ever dreamt of so doing.

Miss Fannie, as we have already seen, was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abraham. She was now eighteen, had graduated from the New York City high school and had had the best music and art teachers which the money of Mr. Abraham could procure. Both parents thought of going to Europe so soon as they would be able to feel that the husband's large business was in safe hands. Then they expected their daughter to complete her education, as they fondly said to her.

The girls had, soon after they came from the hospital, (when Octavia confessed that she thought that Felix might be the supposedly dead brother,) frankly asked Felix all about his family history; but he had at the same time told the girls that he had his own private reasons for not talking much about his parents. By and by he would go home and all would be well. Where that home is and who his parents are, or were, we too will find out at the proper time; but for the present it is a secret with the Dives. They are a good illustration of the fact that there are some women in the world who can keep a secret. They even made up their minds that they would not say anything to Octavia, unless she would have sufficient interest in Felix to ask them, now that she was well, what they had learned concerning him. Octavia on the other hand, thought that because they said nothing further, they had not learned anything. Now that Felix was gone and had a more honorable position she wished that he might be her brother.

When Octavia was told that Sharp was in the parlor and wished to see her, she arose quickly and walked to the glass to smooth her hair and see that she looked as prepossessing as possible. This time as she looked into the glass she saw the grey hair that gave her large forehead the whiteness and smoothness of marble. Then she recalled that she was no longer what she had been when she last saw Mr. Sharp her "agent," as she had been in the habit of calling him during her illness and since. How would he take the

change which her illness had wrought? But then what did she care, how he took the change? What was he to her beside her agent? Then she recalled the dream which she had had, when she first became ill, and which she had repeated that very evening. How vividly it all came back to her now. Was she re-dreaming the same old dream now that she was awake? She had about made up her mind that she would not go down that evening. She was beginning to feel so nervous. If she would go down now, Mr. Sharp would consider her an old, broken-down woman. But what matter, she again asked herself, what Mr. Sharp thought of her? She had taken a seat by the glass, in front of which she had stood a moment before, and again she asked herself the question which she had asked her Heavenly Father, when she first saw herself dressed in the hospital, for her first walk into the bright winter sunshine, reflected to her from ten thousand crystals of snow. Why had she not died? We may ask this question with her by and by. Let us remember that He who holds our lives in the hollow of his hands cannot err. He knows when it is best to enter that "Undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns."

Octavia did not know how long she sat before Jennie Dives again rapped. When she received permission to come in she said innocently, sweetly, as her vigorous young life before which the world seemed an Eden taught her to say "Sister, that old man down there

is dying to see you." Then she looked at Octavia and saw that the tears were running down her pale cheeks. She ran up to her and putting her arms around the waist of the nurse she knelt beside the low stool upon which Octavia sat and kissed her on the forehead. Octavia said, " Pardon me, angel, I was dreaming." Jennie thought that she meant that she had had a day dream of herself before her sickness, and in her warm, big heart she pitied her. Octavia meant what she said. Her dream, more than her altered appearance, had brought the tears to her eyes. It was only when Susie came and asked whether they had both gone to sleep and whether they were living in "The Haunted Castle" that nobody returned that went into the room upstairs? that the ladies realized that their delay was becoming inexcusable to those who were waiting for them. The three went down stairs together.

When Octavia entered between the two girls, Sharp looked at Octavia and at once his expression changed from the pleasant air he had worn to the snaky, villainous look to which we have so often alluded. He stole a sharp glance at Susie Dives as much as to say, " You are certainly fooling me. This is not Octavia Newman, M. D." Then he fixed the inquisitive stare upon the poor nurse until she began to tremble. In a moment Sharp recollected himself. He realized that the girls recognized his doubt, his embarrassment. He realized, too, that Octavia stood before him, so he arose and greeted her warmly. He said: "The girls told me what a siege you have had. I am glad

you are so well again." Sharp was glad she was well, but for his and not the girl's sake.

Felix said he must go; but the Dives insisted that it was still early. Octavia took the hint. She said to the company: "Because Mr. Sharp has come to see me on a little business, I will invite him to the dining room and not break up your pleasant society."

CHAPTER XXXI.

OCTAVIA IS RICH AT LAST.

“ When fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threatening eye.”

—*Shakespeare.*

As soon as Sharp and Octavia entered the dining-room he at once became interested in the silver-ware on the chiffonier. The Dives had solid table cutlery. Tea and coffee services were also solid. There was in the collection a crystal cake-basket which had once belonged to the Medici, so it had been told them by their mother who was of Italian stock and related to that once famous Italian house. Much of this ware was highly prized. It had come down to the girls from former generations. When Sharp saw this tempting array of ware he went to the chiffonier and examined everything within reach of his covetous eyes. He told Octavia that he had a love for the beautiful which, owing to the unhappy turn his domestic relations had taken, he was unable to gratify. By and by he hoped to have a home in which peace and plenty should rule, then he would indulge his love for art and costly wares. He loved to look at the beautiful whenever and wherever he had an opportunity. He was in the habit of taking notes, so that he would have many suggestions for the furnishing of

his own home when the proper time came. And she, the silly woman, believed him.

It did seem strange to her that Sharp was so long in coming to the point in regard to the business. She wished to approach the subject a number of times; but he had kept her from it. In some inexplicable way he seemed able to read her thoughts, and lead them into any channel he wished. As the conversation continued, the old and strange admiration she had had for the man before her illness began to revive. She said within herself, "This man is interesting. He is more to me than I allowed myself to think whilst I was separated from him."

Finally he walked away from the chiffonier, and seated himself at the table. Then, after he had drawn the chair nearest him as close as he wished it, he beckoned Octavia to sit beside him. Next he drew out of his coat-pocket a bundle of large envelopes. Taking one of these he opened it with a self-satisfied air, and began to read the description of the property outside of the city of Omaha. Octavia, who had never had occasion to read a deed, recognized that what Sharp was reading was really a deed to the property which the administrator had designated as a valuable cattle-ranch. As Sharp read, Octavia listened in silence. When he had finished this, he took the envelope next in order, which was a description of the city property. After this, he read an itemized account of a sale of cattle which had taken place on what was now Octavia's cattle ranch. It had amounted to five hun-

dred dollars. After reading this he drew out his purse and laid on the table a draft payable to Eliza Nieman. The draft was good for three hundred dollars. Next he read an itemized account of the expenses incurred by the administrator in legally transferring the property into Eliza Nieman's name. The administrator had been well paid for his trouble, but he had not by any means robbed Octavia.

Next Sharp drew out the last paper from the bundle which he had laid on the table. It contained a lease, which gave to a certain Augustus Bear the right to farm in such a way as he should see fit the land described in the first deed. Sharp explained that he knew that that was the very best that Octavia could do with the cattle-ranch, so he had taken time by the fore-lock and had found a renter. The truth of the matter was that the lease was sent by the administrator in the hope that his son, Augustus, would be able to make terms for the use of the property for a term of years. Sharp had thought the matter over, and knew just what he would advise the girl to do with the property both in and out of the town. He said that he expected Octavia to sign both copies of the lease, and then he would return the one to Bear. She would also be compelled to make an affidavit that she had received the deeds, etc., from her agent, William Sharp, Esq., which he would send back to Omaha. After he was through reading all the documents, he handed them to Octavia, then he gathered the remainder of the envelopes which, he said to Octavia, con-

cerned some other business; but which, in reality, were envelopes filled with news-paper, cut to suit, and to make an impression of Sharp's volume of business upon the unsophisticated girl.

Sharp knew that this lengthy display of the documents which concerned Octavia's inheritance, would augment her agent's business tact in her estimation. So it had. Gradually the prejudice which she had conceived against her agent, wore away. She confessed that she did not know that he had been so intensely busy, and that for her sake, as these papers proved. And then there was that big packet, which no doubt contained matters representing thousands of dollars. Even if he would have called at the hospital, he would not have been able to help her, and she could certainly not have helped him in the work which he had done so well for her. As she thought of all this, she felt that he must literally have hovered between New York and Omaha for several months. What would he charge her for all this valuable service? He certainly had had more care than Bear, the administrator, and he had charged her two-hundred dollars for his work and some other items which she did not understand. She thought that she would give Sharp the draft for the three hundred dollars; but this might be too little. At last, when Sharp had again looked over his package, she ventured to ask him whether he had been compelled to do much hovering between the two cities mentioned. He replied with a smile, (he always smiled when pleased,) that he had been back and forth

considerable; but that it had profited him in many ways.

When Octavia asked him whether the draft of three hundred dollars would be sufficient remuneration for his service, he raised himself in his chair, and said he could only take one remuneration from her. When she asked him, with eyes cast on the table before her, half in dread and half in pleasant anticipation of what he would say to her, he replied he wished her to repay him by always being willing to come to his assistance whenever and in whatever way he might wish her so to do. When she said in reply, that she did not see how she, a woman, could be much help to a man, a lawyer like himself, Sharp felt that he had not said just what he meant. The experiences of the past few weeks had in some way stripped him of the self-assurance which he had had when he was not quite as bad as now. It was not that his conscience was making a coward of him, for conscience was a faculty of his soul that he tried to stunt and stifle. There was a feeling which all cowards have, that something dreadful would sooner or later come to his life. This was the reason that Sharp had not told Octavia just what he meant nor in the way he meant it. He did wish her money, and he did wish any influence she might have in helping him in his bad life. Sharp did wish to use the woman before him whenever and in whatever way he pleased.

Octavia knew that what he had said to her did not express or even hint at the old admiration which he

had had for her, or at least had said he had for her. She knew that she was changed in appearance since they had last met. She felt that she had grown at least five years older in the few weeks she had spent in suffering at the hospital. For Sharp's sake, more than her own, (at least so she tried to persuade herself,) she wished that she had not changed so much for the worse. She did not, for the time being, think that a true man would have pitied her misfortune, that a man capable of sincere affection would have been drawn closer to her because of her misfortune and need of sympathy. Because of all this, she sighed and said, "I am sadly changed since last we met. The strength I lost in that awful illness will never fully return to me. Yes, I am changed, changed for the worse." She burst into tears, and turned her head in a vain attempt to hide her feelings from the man who sat before her. When she turned, Sharp smiled a mocking smile, instead of shedding a tear of sympathy with the girl in her deep affliction. But those tears had their effect upon him. He felt that he must say something which would cause Octavia to think that whatever admiration he had had for her face and form before her illness, was not destroyed by the fact that she was not now as handsome as he had tried to make her believe he thought her then to be. He said: "You have changed some, but you will recover all you lost. Your illness will, by and by, prove a benefit to you even in your personal appearance. I never admired a woman for the beauty that

is only skin-deep. Your heart has not changed toward me because of your illness. I am sure that mine has not toward you. I never asked you if you loved me. Our acquaintance has been comparatively short, and I was still the husband of another woman when we last met." (He even then, so far as he knew, was the husband of another woman; but to Octavia he tried to imply that such was no longer the case.) "I thought I would let you learn my worth, and prove to you that I could still love a true woman before I would intimate to you that—" He left his sentence unfinished. Octavia, who had been averting her eyes, partly because she wished to appear modest and coy, and partly because she really still was physically weak, and could not have studied Sharp's face during the time he was delivering himself of his sentimental lies which, to any one studying his face just then, would have been reminded of the slime with which the serpent covers his victim previous to deglutition, raised her eyes and beheld the old, snaky look in his face that we have so often spoken of. It was then that she, for the first time during all the evening, thought of her dream. It came back to her upon the wings of thought, suggested by the look in Sharp's face, in terrible distinctness. She simply looked at him without saying a word, and he, mistaking the look for the cool, calculating stare, in which he himself used to indulge before he was as wicked as now, cowered before her. She mistook his uneasiness for inborn modesty, of which Sharp had not a single grain, and thought to

relieve him by saying something, just what she scarcely knew. She did finally manage to say, "We can speak of this again. The hour is late." Then Sharp made a polite bow and stepped out into the night by the dining room door, which, in the pre-occupied state of his mind, he thought led into the hall where were his coat and hat. The cold, raw atmosphere soon convinced him that he had made a mistake. His absent-mindedness made Octavia laugh until the tears again rolled over her face. Sharp was glad he had made the mistake. It relieved him of the awkwardness of the situation, into which the later conversation of the evening had led him.

When Sharp was gone Octavia retired to her room, and without again looking at the papers, threw them into her trunk. She immediately retired; but it was a long time before she could sleep. She reviewed the conversation of the evening in all its details. She asked herself again and again whether Sharp had really asked her to be his wife. She did not feel sure that he had, so she would not try to decide what answer she would give him. She felt that that question would come to her from the "smart lawyer," as she loved to call him in her own mind; but until it did come she would not answer it. She felt that Sharp had some influence over her. She did not know whether it was really love that caused her to think kindly of Sharp, or what it was; but she did acknowledge that he was more to her than any man she had ever met before.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OCTAVIA IS ENGAGED.

“It is not money, but the love of money, which is the root of all evil. It is the relation between wealth and the mind, and the character of its possessor which is the essential thing.”

—*Hillard.*

When Sharp got to his lodgings the night he had brought the deeds to Octavia he felt that that woman had not gone beyond his power. She still remained to him the means for retrieving his lost fortunes. He felt glad that she had come into his life at a time he most needed her. It was Octavia's money Sharp was after. He cared very little for her personally, even before her sickness; now that she had changed into a regular old woman, thin and weazen-faced, with her thin, gray curls clinging to her scalp, like “the wool on the head of an old nigger,” as he said aloud to himself in his room, when he that night thought on the plans which he would adopt to get Octavia's wealth, he made up his mind that it would be very difficult to get her money without taking her also. He admitted that it might cost him a great deal of inconvenience to be encumbered with the woman; but he was willing to do that in order that he might again hold up his head as he once did. He would ask her to be his wife.

There was no other way. Perhaps a kind fate would deliver him of her soon. He would trust to luck; but the money he must have at all hazards. That part of the transaction was therefore settled in Sharp's mind. The poor man forgot that even wealth is to some people what ingots are to an ass' back, the means of gall-ing and wearying it. Upon the sea on whose mighty billows Sharp had cast himself, gold would drag him to destruction so much the sooner. Wealth seldom gives happiness; to men of Sharp's kind, it never does. Like poison to the suicide, it may seem before it is taken, the panacea to all ills; but it soon reveals the fraud.

But suppose Octavia should not accept his hand in marriage? Pshaw, there could be no doubt about that. Had she not said: "We can speak of this again. The hour is late." "But, Sharp," said he to himself, "you must not bungle as you did to-night, or the bird may escape you in the end. I will say to her that my life is being wasted on the desert air without her companionship. I can no longer live without her, and that is exactly true," he added. Slapping his hands behind his back in glee, he got into his bed and was soon snoring like a funnel.

One week after that, Sharp stood on the front doorstep of the Dives' home just as the clock in the Trinity steeple struck eight. He had on his best clothing; but they were nothing to brag of. The truth of the matter was, that the one hundred dollars which he had thought to use in part for the replenishing of his ward-

robe, were in a good many different hands in a very few evenings after they had been filched out of his vest pocket as he stood with uplifted hands on the corner of Bleeker and Christopher streets. He remembered that night with all the horrid details of the different scenes upon which he had looked. In fact, he had not been able to steady his nerves since that night, and like Octavia's illness, it had left its mark upon him. The hard lines about his mouth were deepened, and what was strangest, his hair had turned to a shade of gray, which resembled an icicle, frozen out of dirty water. It seemed to him that the horror which had frozen his soul into insensibility also had whitened his hair. It was even so. Perhaps it was a cruel irony, because of his lack of sympathy for poor Octavia. How would he account for the change in the color of his hair to Octavia? He would say that two lives which were intended to flow on together would take on a similarity which was often as striking as it was difficult to be accounted for; but Octavia was a nurse, a physician, as he thought, and would scarcely be satisfied with such an answer.

Octavia came to the door. She extended her hand in cordial greeting. They entered the parlor. She said the Dives and Felix were out spending the evening together, and they would consequently be undisturbed.

"Felix and the Dives?" Sharp fairly screamed in his surprise.

"Yes, Felix and the Dives," Octavia added. "Felix is no longer a coachman. He is head book-keeper in Abraham's wholesale establishment, for more than two months already." Then she told Mr. Sharp of the good fortune that had come to Felix by the merest accident. Sharp listened with open-mouthed wonder, then said with an air of intense disgust, that "fortune, like love, sometimes smiled on a jackass." But that is just what fortune had not done this time. We have already seen that Felix's fortune would have plunged him into a whole sea of trouble if he had not had the moral and mental qualifications to adapt himself to the fortunate circumstances which had come upon him.

After he had finished his tirade against the blindness of luck and the assurance some people possess, he put on a different look entirely. He said: "Do you remember what you said one week ago to-night?" As he said this he left the chair upon which he had been sitting and seated himself upon the sofa beside Octavia. He took the hand of the woman in his, and repeated, "Do you remember?"

"Remember what?" said Octavia, her voice trembling with suppressed emotion.

"You said," replied Sharp, "just as I was going out, 'we can speak of this again.' Now I wish to speak of this again. I will tell you that I love you. I have loved you ever since I first became thoroughly acquainted with you, on the mountain side during our pleasant outing last summer. In fact it

seems to me that I never saw a woman whom nature and education had so well fitted for me, for any man, in fact, that can appreciate a true woman, like you, Octavia. I was disappointed in my first love. I mistook passion for love, as giddy youth so often does. It is different now. My heart seeks companionship, seeks a haven from the vexations and disappointments which come to all of us in life. Will you, dear girl, be mine until death do us part?" He bent down and kissed the woman's forehead, and she did not resist. Her eyes were fixed on the floor. Her hand was moist and twitched nervously in his. Sharp noticed this, and a smile of triumphant satisfaction overspread his cunning face, and the old snaky look was in his eyes, as he added, "And must silence be the only answer you will give me?"

Octavia's lips quivered, and as they quivered, parted; but the answer which she had tried to frame died upon them. Again the man broke the silence. "Octavia, dear, tell me that I have not sought your heart in vain." Any man with a refined nature would have pitied the girl as she sat there beside the coarse, brutal hypocrite, who, like the serpent that gloated over the mother of us all as she took the forbidden fruit, felt that his victory was complete, and with the feeling of victory coupled that of exultation at his easy conquest.

Finally Octavia found her voice. "Mr. Sharp, this is all so soon, so hurried. We have not met a dozen times in our lives. I need time for considera-

tion. Leave me to think over this, the most solemn step we can take in all our lives."

Sharp urged that she did know him. Had he not always been square in his dealings, and had he not shown his efficiency in the management of her affairs? He was no longer at that period in his life when he did things without thinking. He loved her. Why should she keep him in suspense? Had Sharp known it, his chances for a favorable answer were just then waning. The dream came to her in all its vividness. In fact it seemed to her that the angel of her destiny had unrolled before her a scroll upon which he had distinctly drawn in vivid outline all the terrible features of the vision that had again repeated itself the night preceding, with this change, or addition rather, that the serpent last night buried his fangs deeply, first into her heart, and then as if not satisfied with the result, had also infused his poison into her brain by a second stroke.

After she had said what she did, about the reasons for considering the proposed alliance, she lifted her eyes, and read the snaky, cunning look of which her dream had been a premonition. She felt a little shudder come over her, and gently withdrew her hand. Within himself Sharp swore a short, quick little oath, and then, with the devil in his soul and a desperate effort to assume the appearance of an angel of light he again sought her hand. Taking it once more, he said: "Octavia, can you crush a man's heart beneath the wheels of procrastination? Can you spurn

my offers of love? I will do my best to give you a happy home. I know that we will live like two angels. I do not need your wealth. Use your money as you see fit. I must have your heart."

Octavia again thought of the dream. Would she allow a dream to ruin her prospects in life? She dreamt because she was nervous.

Again Sharp began in language more plaintive than before to sue for the woman's heart. The smile of triumph had faded from his lips, but the old look continued in his eye. Octavia noticed his earnestness, and with an effort that was perceived by Sharp, she said: "Mr. Sharp, I will be your wife, if you will prove yourself worthy of a woman's love. You know you are divorced, and I have known you only a short time."

Sharp embraced the woman at his side and gave her a kiss. It was the first token of affection shown her on the part of a man for years, and the kiss, though it was a kiss such as Judas gave his Master, fell (like a welcome shower upon dry and thirsty ground) with refreshing upon her lips.

Then they discussed the best time for their marriage. It was February now. They finally decided that until Christmas would give them ample time to perfect their arrangements. He said, that being he was not a church-man, as he was inclined to term his lack of religious conviction, his downright devilish way of living, he would prefer to be married by a judge or alderman. He did this as much to find out what

really were Octavia's religious convictions as anything. She told him that she was not a very faithful church member, but she had a religious mother and would prefer to be married by a minister of the gospel. There was time to arrange that they both agreed. There were many little plans that Octavia had made years ago, with regard to her marriage, should she ever have the pleasure of being led to the marriage-altar. Some of these came back to her now like the memory of sweet dreams, and she told them to Sharp. He seemed bent on pleasing her, and gave a ready approval of them all. The girl was happy. Even the roses which had faded from her cheeks came back to her as she and Sharp discussed the plans. It was eleven o'clock when Felix brought the Dives to the house. Sharp realized that it was time to go. As soon as the girls had said their good-night in their bright, cheery voices to their escort, Sharp again kissed the woman, who that evening had given herself "soul and body to him." Then he went to his rooms. He was pleased. He said, "I had to buy the old hulk in order to get at the cargo. I think the whole transaction will pay."

Ten minutes after Sharp had left, Octavia knocked at the door of the Dives' bed-room, and when she was admitted, she said, "Girls, I am engaged to be married."

The girls looked at each other, then at Octavia, when Susie said, "To Mr. Sharp?"

"Even to him," was Octavia's reply.

Then the Dives pitied her from the depths of their souls. They said nothing to Octavia, for fear of hurting her feelings, but they were very sorry for her. Sitting on the edge of the girls' bed, she told them all about the good fortune that had come to her, and when she had finished they pitied her still more. Of course they kissed her, kissed her even with tenderness, such as a mother would bestow upon her innocent child which has fallen and broken its back; because the mother would know what the child did not, namely, that the little one would be helpless and hopeless the rest of its sad life.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE WING.

“ To him who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language.”—*Bryant*.

Just one week after the conversation in the parlor, Dr. Burns left Colorado Springs for a three weeks trip in New Mexico and Southern California. Susie and Jennie Dives who the day before had come to Colorado to spend the summer, had easily persuaded Mr. Dives to allow them to go to the Golden State. It had been a busy week with the girls, and everybody was happy. A few hours after Dr. Burns left Colorado Springs he was met at the little station by the other three of the party.

As they intended to visit Acoma and other points of interest, they took the Santa Fe route. We will not dwell upon the points of interest they visited in and around Santa Fe where they spent several days, because Mr. Dives' business required it. We have already spoken of the visit to the Pueblos, so we will not weary the reader by dwelling upon old scenes.

Our party stopped at Flagstaff, and there took the stage which now runs three times a week to the Cañons of the Colorado. The journey to the Grand Cañon is in itself of sufficient interest to repay the

tourist for his time and money. For many miles the road passes through primeval parks of pine, perfectly free from undergrowth, and carpeted for the most part with nature's most lovely green. Then there are open stretches of road from which the traveler sees the great San Francisco peaks like giant sentinels following his path. Then he goes over broad ranges where cattle pasture and where the white tent of the herders gleams in the sunshine like a huge white feathered bird. When at last our travelers quit the stage there is nothing to assure them except the reports of previous visitors that they are not to be disappointed. A small crag which scarcely reaches to the northern slope of the glen is the only object which hints at the presence of anything beside the peaceful woodland, where the flowers bloom and the birds twitter among the branches of the pines. The visitor at the direction of his guide strides quickly forward to see whether he has not been disappointed by giving too much credence to the reports of others. He halts suddenly, and with feelings indescribable he gazes at the great chasm which has opened at his feet and which stretches away to the far horizon. When he becomes master of his own thoughts again, he realizes that words cannot exaggerate the sublime spectacle that stretches before him. It is at once intensely real and superhumanly weird and spectral. It is as if the creative energy that brought order out of chaos everywhere else, had been exhausted by the effort, and had paused here to take the much needed rest before com-

pleting the gigantic task. It has been well said that the "labyrinth of architectural forms of every known order and design are here." It flashes instant communications of all that architecture and painting and music for a thousand years have gropingly striven to express. Our friends tarried here a day and then went on their journey. At the usual time, that is about thirty-six hours after they left Flagstaff, they arrived in the city of Los Angeles. The girls went to the cousin who had married since Jennie and Susie had been to see her the year before and lived in a neat home on Washington street. The girls as a matter of course made the most of their short visit. There were several trips that they must take with Carrie. One must be to the mountains; another must be a sail on the Pacific.

The trip to the mountains was the one they first arranged for. In the Sierras not far from the "City of the Angels," there are many pleasant cañons. These are frequented by visitors especially during the summer months. It was to one of these, which the Los Angeles cousin had visited before, and which she in consequence well knew, that she planned to take her friends. The party was to consist of herself and the visitors. Her own husband was away, being a commercial traveler. It was doubtful whether he would return in time to meet the Dives. They were to return the same evening. At the last moment the Los Angeles cousin became ill. The doctor advised her to stay at home, much to her own and the entire party's

regret. The driver who took them out in a carriage, was well acquainted with the road and the cañon, the Los Angeles cousin urged, and they would get along quite as well without her as if she went along. Inasmuch as the time was short and the trip could not be put off, they went alone.

After a drive of nearly three hours during the last half hour of which they threaded along a narrow mountain road which every moment became rougher, the driver halted and told them that he would go no further. He would unhitch his horses and they might take their lunch baskets and go up the cañon, where they would find many pleasant places to spread their lunch and have a good time. As soon as he had unhitched and fed his horses he would follow them.

The two lunch baskets were accordingly taken out of the carriage, and the two men took the lead up the road. The girls chatted pleasantly together behind them. After walking more than half a mile up the cañon, during which the little stream that flowed along the road became wider, they finally concluded to spread their lunch on a big, flat rock beside the stream. The cloth was accordingly spread and the luncheon tastily arranged upon it. Even the spreading of a lunch in the woods upon the ground will tell the observant student of human nature something of the habits and character of those who spread the lunch. An observer on this occasion might have been impressed with the neatness and taste with which the lunch was arranged on the clean, white cloth.

The book-keeper had made a fire and the girls were not without that which is usually so acceptable to a woman, both at home and when she is where water is purest and freshest—the indispensable cup of coffee. When all was ready the party of four gathered around the repast and did ample justice to their meal. The driver who came when they were half through, would have fared ill, had they not brought enough for two meals. Hunger is good sauce. It gives the most ordinary viands an ambrosial sweetness. It is almost sure to come to him who delves into the forest's depth or pierces the mountain's glen.

Whilst the driver was eating his luncheon he told our little party of a pretty water-fall farther up the cañon, where three great mountains put an abrupt termination to the little water course, and where the stream leaped into being as it were, over a giant wall of rock. Of course they could not miss this. They had seen finest evidences that nature loved to show the sublime; but it would not do to go home and say that they had not seen this water-fall.

So they left the man in the best of spirits. He said he would take both of the baskets with him to the wagon, where they would find everything safe when they returned. Our friends delighted themselves in studying the different formations of rock which the water, during the past centuries, had laid bare. Sometimes they would see among the old granite formations a rock which had been taken out of its place in the side of the mountain far above them and hurled

among the smoothly worn granite as if it had come from another world. By and by they heard the splashing of the water, and turning a bend in the cañon they saw it leap from the mouth of another cañon far above them. The moss-grown sides of the rock had in them here and there little hollows, which were lined over, roof and side, with short, thick, green moss, as if prepared by a fairy groom for his fairy bride. They looked at the pure stream of water, shining wherever the sun struck it like a sheet of liquid silver, shifting its myriad rainbows to every side.

It was Dr. Burns who first proposed that they climb the mountain to their right, which seemed to have a tolerably well defined trail as far as the eye could see. It was still early in the afternoon, and they could be back in ample time to reach the city before it got very late. Jennie was the weakest in the company. She hesitated. She said she had had some experience in climbing mountains in California only a year before. Then she had had the service of one good donkey. Whilst it seemed to her that they were all donkeys in this crowd, she doubted whether there was one who would give her the aid she had received from the creature which had borne her to the top of a mountain near this one. They all took her sally at wit goodnaturedly. Dr. Burns said it did not depend on the size of a donkey's ears as to how loudly he could bray. Jennie was an illustration of that. Finally they all agreed that it did not look at all far

up to the top of that mountain, and they all had some curiosity to see what was beyond it. They retraced their steps down the cañon to a place where they could cross the creek, and then took the trail toward the top. We will leave them in their ascent and go back to the carriage.

The driver was having a very nice time all to himself that afternoon. He had brought a seaside library with him, and was wading through the story which finally brought its hero to wed a hateful shrew, who made his life miserable, and caused him to take poison which ended his unhappy career. Shutting his book he said aloud to himself, "There, that ends it. Anybody could have known that that woman would be the death of any man. But that makes me think of my party." He then helped himself to what he wished from the baskets. "No use starving when there's a plenty right around you. I once heard of a man dying of thirst when he was tied on his back to a plank and was floating on the water; but I am not that kind of a chicken." Hereupon he pulled out his old watch and shook it. It had stopped with the little hand pointing to four, and the hour-hand at twelve. He shook it again and the hour hand went to six. Whilst it did not tell him the time of day, it did tell him what he had learned many days before, that his watch could not be relied upon. He said, "The sun is all right. She don't go bumping around in the sky. She will set at the right time." Then shading his hand, and looking toward the big luminary, he said,

“That event will occur in just about two hours, or this old huckleberry has lost his bearings.”

The old gentleman lit his pipe and smoked contentedly for about half an hour, then he arose, rubbed his hands, and looked at the sun. Nodding his head he walked towards the horses. He harnessed them, took them to the creek flowing close by, and watered them. Then he hitched them to the carriage, and got ready to start. He looked toward the sun, then up the trail, but there was no one in sight. By and by the sun set, but his party did not come. One by one the stars came out and still there was no one to be seen. He could stand it no longer. He unhitched his horses, fastened them as he had done ten hours before, and started up the trail to see whether he could not find his party.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS.

“ A faint, cold fear thrills through thy veins
That almost freezes up the heart of life.”

—*Shakespeare.*

Our friends found the climbing along the side of the mountain not near as easy as they supposed that it would be. They had all been to the mountains before and had ascended their rugged sides, but always along well defined trails, and with donkeys, not such as those which Jennie had described, but with the sure-footed long-eared little animal that can walk to the top of a house-roof as well as on the even ground, provided it is permitted to have its own way about it.

The trail the young people were following led them along the side of the hill, then it turned at a sharp angle and went almost straight up the side for fifty feet or so, when it again ascended a little more gradually. After they had made the straight climb, which seemed like holding on to the side of a wall, so precipitous it was, they all felt that they must rest. The reader who has ascended the side of a mountain knows that so long as one climbs there is little that makes one feel different from pursuing a difficult path on an ordinary hill. It is only when the traveler turns and looks down the steep sides he has ascended, or perhaps

to a peak opposite to the one on which he is standing, that a feeling of awe and dizziness creeps upon him. One involuntarily hugs the side of the mountain, because he feels that he sticks straight into space like a flag staff on a building. When our friends stopped, this feeling just described, made them all involuntarily sit down. It was a pretty view even half way up the side of the mountain toward the summit of which they were slowly toiling. They could see the little stream winding in the cañon more than a thousand feet beneath them. They could not hear its splashing now. It looked as if it were petrified into a solid mass, lying in the deepest hollow in the cañon, as silver that had suddenly and unexpectedly hardened as it flowed from the smelter, without the workman to guide it into its proper channel. It was a pretty sight and relieved the feeling of dizziness which at first steals over one on looking down from any elevated position.

The girls now advised the gentlemen to descend; but they were determined to reach the top, now that they were half way up. They argued that it would be easy for them to reach the summit, look about them, and then return before it would be dark. It was now only three o'clock in the afternoon. They had come to this point from the water-fall in less than an hour. They would reach the the top in another hour. Then they would rest for an hour if they so wished, and they could easily descend in half the time it had taken them to ascend. Carrie's hero jokingly added, that if they

were pressed for time they could fall down. It was sufficiently steep some places so that one could get to the bottom by striking once or twice.

After a rest of ten minutes or more they again started. Dr. Burns led the way. He had a stout cord about his loins which Jennie, who walked immediately behind him, had passed around her and then the cord was tied to Carrie's left arm. The hero, as everybody in the party had learned to call him, walked unsecured. He jokingly said that he would keep the rest from falling. The doctor who happened to have the cord in his pocket had used it in the manner indicated more in jest than earnest.

Finally they came to an almost perpendicular ascent. For more than fifty yards along this wall of rock the path was several feet wide and very solid, then it terminated in a ditch which the waters from the top of the mountain had worn in their precipitous descent. The ditch was steep and could not be ascended. Those who had gone up the mountain before them, had picked places for their feet in the wall of rock which was not over a dozen feet high. The girls said they could not possibly ascend this rock. The doctor showed them how easy it was by going up first, having detached the cord that bound him to the others. When he was up he lay upon the flat surface of the rock and stretched his hand to Jennie. She was half dragged and half pushed up. When Carrie tried to follow Jennie her hand slipped from the doctor's im-

perfect grasp and she fell backwards into her hero's arms.

The next attempt was more successful. She too was landed on top of the rock. When she was up she said, "Jennie Dives do you ever expect to get down to the bottom of this hill alive?" Again she counseled retracing their footsteps; but the goal was near and they went on. In half an hour more they were on the summit. There was only a narrow cañon at the bottom of the hill, and then another mountain just as high and precipitous as the one upon whose summit they were standing. They felt disappointed; but they were so tired that they all sat down. When they finally arose to go the sun was low, and the doctor said he wished to see the sun set. Toward the west they had by far the best view. The mountain chain deflected toward the north-west. They argued that it could not take long to see the sun set, so they staid. When its red disk was disappearing into a veil of fog which hung low on the ocean, they turned to go. They did not even then realize how short is a California twilight. When they got well started they began to appreciate the fact that it would be dark before they reached the foot of the mountain.

At the top of the mountain there were a number of paths, and the sage was higher than it was on the side over which the trail had led them. They walked about ten minutes before they realized that they were going in an opposite direction from that in which they had intended to go. They reascended

to the summit and set out afresh. They walked fully half an hour and at last came to a wall of rock. It seemed a little steeper than when they ascended it; for they felt sure that it must be the very same over which they had climbed an hour or so before. It was now quite dark, but they managed to get down in safety. As they went on, the path became more and more indistinct. Finally they concluded that they would better wait for the rising of the moon. It had been full-moon only the evening previous. It would then be light as day. After they sat a little while they first realized how cold and hungry they were. It might be dangerous to start a fire. It would attract wild animals, and besides they might set fire to the dry grass, and have a bigger fire than they wished. But they were getting so cold. Finally the men found a flat rock in the trail. They cleaned all the dry grass away, and tried to find some wood. This was by no means an easy task. There was enough thin, brushy material, but nothing thick enough to make a lasting fire. Finally they succeeded in finding some roots, and the fire was started. Its cheering warmth made them feel better, but it did not relieve their hunger. They told all the stories they knew, but there was not much entertainment in the stories or the narrators.

Just as the clouds in the eastern horizon became silvered with the rising moon, and their old spirit of cheerfulness was beginning to assert itself, there was a noise in the bushes close by, as of some large animal.

The thought of mountain lions, wild cats and even huge rattle-snakes, in an instant filled the souls of the girls with terror. Almost as soon as the noise began two revolvers flashed their bright steel in the fire-light. The whole party felt better when they realized that they were not wholly defenceless. The noise had ceased almost as soon as it had begun. The beating of the girls' hearts might have been heard if the party would have been listening for heart throbs just then. Usually fear springs from ignorance, but it terrifies more than when a knowledge of the real danger fills the mind. Imaginary dangers, like imagined causes for trouble, are the most trying. Dangers seen beget courage, but unseen they are magnified by the imagination until they are large and awful enough to drive every bit of courage from the heart of the bravest man, and fill it with the most abject terror. It was so with every man and woman in that little party.

Carrie's hero thought that he could do nothing better than to discharge the revolver, which he did accordingly, and which added to the terror of the rest, until they learned that he had discharged it to frighten not them, but the supposed lurking foe. When he shot, a large, red animal bounded into the air, and ran in an opposite direction. Both of the men shouted, "A deer!" What a nice supper they might have had, had they known that the animal which had terrified them so was really nothing but a deer, which had been attracted to the fire.

The moon had now dispelled the darkness, and they felt that they had better go, or it would be morning before they would reach the city, if indeed they would reach it then. Their driver might have left them in his anxiety to get back. They now descended rapidly, although they at times lost the trail, and scratched themselves in the bushes. In less than an hour after the discharge of the pistol they were at the foot of the mountain. They were tired, it was true, but the walk of half a mile or so that must be taken before they would get to their lunch baskets was nothing at all, now that they were safely at the foot of the trail. It seemed strange they did not hear the water-fall. The stream, too, seemed larger than it had been when they walked on its banks in the afternoon. All of the party were impressed with the strange appearance of the cañon. It did not seem as wide as before. At last Carrie's hero said: "I will leave you and go up the cañon until I get to the fall."

Dr. Burns said he could not see what that would be for.

Carrie said: "I know why he wishes to go to the falls. He thinks that he will not be able to find them on this side of the mountain. In other words, we are lost. We are farther from the carriage now than we have been all this day."

It was even so. Our friends had taken the wrong road from the start. They had gone in an opposite direction from what they had intended. The great shelf of rock over which they had come, and which

made them feel sure that they were on the right road, had simply repeated itself on the side of the mountain along which they had come. The truth had been forced upon all of them about the same time; but no one had been brave enough to confess it. One thing was sure: they were too tired, and it was too unsafe even to try to climb the mountain before daylight. Jennie sobbed aloud, and said, "Oh, why did we come to this dreadful place? We will never get home again. Oh, my poor sister."

"Come now, Cousin, be brave," said Carrie. "Don't give up to death until you are sure you must. I expect to eat my luncheon in Los Angeles. I wish I could have some of it now. I would be willing to forego the pleasure of eating it later."

Carrie's hero proposed that Dr. Burns stay with the ladies, and that he return to the carriage and get them some food. He said he felt sure he would be able to return by daylight. Dr. Burns favored the plan; but Carrie said if he could return she felt that she, at least, could accompany him. Of course our friend knew that it would be impossible for the girl to do it. He said he would rest a little while and then he would start. There could be nothing to eat until he brought it. Anything they might be able to shoot could not be prepared so as to make it at all palatable.

After our friend had rested about half an hour, and Dr. Burns had kindled a fire for the comfort of the ladies, he arose and said: "Well, folks, I am going. Keep up your spirits, and by two o'clock you will see

me coming over the hill, and we will have coffee, and the best breakfast we have had since we left Colorado.''

The girls saw that the hero's plan was their only hope, so they finally consented that he should go. Carrie rose and went with him a few steps, then stretching out her hand she said: "Good-by, you dear, brave fellow. God bless you." The hero turned and was gone. Half an hour afterwards they heard a pistol-shot. It sounded far away and above them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SUNDRIES.

“ Dark and despairing, my sight I may seal,
But man cannot cover what God would reveal:
* * * * *
And coming events cast their shadows before.”

—*Campbell.*

The summer that Jennie Dives spent in Colorado and in traveling, the Dives' home on Fifth Avenue was closed. The horses were given in charge of the attorney of the Dives. He used them during the greater part of the time; one of his own having died shortly before, he sold the remaining one. It was thus quite an accommodation to both him and his neighbors to take charge of their team. Susie said she was glad that they were not compelled to sell the team, because they were both good and reliable horses.

The cook was given a place in his old profession, in a restaurant on Coney Island. He gave Susie Dives his promise to return to the Dives' kitchen no later than the first of September. The fact that he had a good place kept him away from Sharp and defended him against his old companions with whom he had become tolerably intimate during the fall and winter of his stay in the city.

Susie Dives went with a lady friend first to Coney Island and then to the more quiet place known as

Ocean Grove. She was spending the season very pleasantly. She knew that her sister was in good hands although she for a part of the summer did not hear from her every week. The reader of this narrative will learn why this apparent neglect on the part of Jennie. He will see that at times it was better to keep silent than to write. We cannot say that Susie felt herself neglected on the part of her sister; but we do know that she would have been glad to hear from her more frequently than she did. She had a loving heart and for no one was her affection stronger than for her sister.

Felix kept his place behind the desk of Mr. Abraham. He did not even ask for a vacation; although he did feel somewhat lonesome, because he knew that all his friends were out of the city. The Abrahams had a summer home on the banks of the Hudson. Mr. Abraham spent much of his time there with his wife and daughter. They staid there from the beginning of June until the last of September. Much of the work that Mr. Abraham did devolved in his absence upon the book-keepers. In the few months that Felix had been in the business he had learned most of what was required to keep things going during the quieter months of the summer. If it would have been the busy season it would have been different. One Saturday afternoon, he was called to the telephone. Mr. Abraham was there. He said, "Felix, is that you?" The reply being in the affirmative he said, "Felix, the ladies invite you to come up to the cha-

teau to spend Sunday with us. You can tell the rest in the office that you will not be back before Monday afternoon, or Tuesday morning. It is likely that this will be all the vacation that you will get this summer." Felix thanked the old gentleman for his kindness and communicated the instructions to the rest in the office.

The head book-keeper said, "Felix, I can't understand why you are so popular with the old man. We have been in this office five years. In all that time we never had an invitation to the chateau, nor to his home on the Avenue. How do you work it anyhow? How came that girl of his to fall in love with you at sight? There are plenty of men in New York City that are just as good looking as you are."

Felix replied that he did not know why the old gentleman should take a fancy to him more than to the rest. He himself considered them his superiors in every way. And as to the young lady's being in love with him, he had not even thought of such a thing. He considered his informants visionary enough to be poets.

When the proper time came our hero stepped on the train *en route* for the Abraham chateau.

The daughter of Mr. Abraham and her little brother Bennie were at the station to meet Felix. He was invited to step into the phaeton, of which Miss Abraham was herself the driver, and in good and fashionable style she brought him to the chateau. We cannot dwell on a description of this, one of the many beautiful homes that are situated on the Hudson. That

same evening the young lady and he took a boat ride. It was a beautiful moon-light evening. Felix could row and so could his companion. Those of my readers who have taken boat rides with but one companion and that one of their opposite sex, and at their time in life when their hearts were their own, know all the fascination, the charm, the sentiment, the poetry, there is in a moonlight boat ride. There was one thing about Miss Abraham that Felix did not like. We will listen to some of their conversation, perhaps the reader can detect what it is for himself.

"Mr. Felix," (So Miss Abraham insisted on calling her father's book-keeper, even though she knew his full name,) "do you know that you are the only young man that my father ever allowed to come to see me?"

Felix admitted that he did not know that such an honor was conferred upon him. He said he felt flattered.

"Yes, my mother asked him the other day why he did not invite you up to the chateau. He said there was time enough for that yet. My father says he don't believe in rushing things."

Felix said he was aware of that fact; but Felix also admitted that there were some things which Abraham delighted in rushing. Everything about his business he liked to rush. Felix had learned that. "My mother and father were married when she was as old as you are; but I am not nearly as old as papa was when he got married."

We have given the reader the idea. We need not say anything more. This girl had been brought up in luxury. She had all her heart could wish, except the society of young people of the opposite sex. I suppose that if she would have had society like other young people she would have been odd. Some people are. One thing was sure, there was not an employee in the Abraham store who would not have tried very hard to love the girl, if he would have had only the fraction of a chance. She was pretty. By the side of Carrie or Jennie Dives she was homely; but she passed for a pretty girl notwithstanding.

There are two others of whom we must speak. They are Octavia and Mr. Sharp. Octavia was fated to remain in the city the greater part of the summer. She was real strong again. She was summoned to nurse the wife of an English gentleman, who was on his way to the West, but who, on account of his wife's health, got no farther than New York City. Octavia found her charge a very kind woman, patient and appreciative of her nurse's care. She did not see Mr. Sharp very much because of her work. At least that was his excuse for not calling, and she believed him. She had given him the right to sell her property, and he in turn committed the business to a real estate man in Omaha. He instructed him to sell at a sacrifice rather than miss a sale. Mr. Sharp was anxious to convert Octavia's possessions into money.

Sharp himself stayed in the Metropolis during a part of the summer. He made some plans for little

odd jobs in the city as he called them, when he spoke to his friends. The fact of the matter is Sharp was cunning. He could make plans for others to carry out, but he was too cowardly to execute them himself. His three companions were exactly the opposite. They could make no plans, but they were to Sharp's schemes what the army is to the general. They were not afraid to undertake what he planned. They had the utmost confidence in his wisdom. Only once did Sharp undertake a "little work" on his own account. He watched for Felix one evening as he approached his lodgings, which were still in the room to which he had moved for the safety of the Dives the latter part of the winter. When Sharp saw the young man approaching the home of the Dives, he stepped up to him and stretching out his hand towards him, he said, whilst at the same time a smile that fairly puckered his thin lips, illuminated his countenance, "Mr. F., I have been wishing to see you for some time already. I suppose you have entirely forgotten that little matter between you and me. I knew when you first came here that you were not overly flush, so I did not wish to press you; but I understand you are as good as a partner in a large wholesale house in this city now, and booked to marry the girl whose father took you out of the street. Being you are so favorably situated I thought I would remind you of the little account."

Felix looked him straight into the face, and in a short, gruff way, said, "What account? I know of no account between you and me."

"You remember, I guess, that I secured you the place of coachman? Because you have risen above it is no reason that you should forget your debts. I always charge a commission when I procure a place for anyone."

"Mr. Sharp, you know that you were not running an employment bureau at the time you hired me as coachman for the Dives. You know, too, that they insisted on your taking five dollars for your trouble."

Sharp's smile had changed into a frown. The fact that the girls had even deigned to tell Felix that they had insisted on his taking five dollars for his afternoon's visit to Felix made him mad. Before he realized what he was saying, and saying to one of the warmest friends of the young ladies in New York, he blurted out, "They lie, if they say—" He had not finished his sentence before he lay in the gutter, in front of the Dives' home. He arose more scared than hurt and walked away swearing the most horrid oaths that Felix ever had heard.

That same evening Sharp entered the second-hand clothing room on West street, and asked the woman, who seemed to be alone in the establishment, "Are the boys not in?"

She pointed to the back room. He walked to the door, when some one, whom Sharp recognized as the husband, very angrily swore, and asked whether he had not told her to stay out and keep the door shut. Sharp replied, "It is I. Let me in." Instantly the door was opened. Sharp saw a silver brick cooling in

the sand. His eyes twinkled as he said, "Oh, ho! That looks like business. That is a nice little fellow. He is worth more than two night's loss of sleep. And the work itself had not sufficient excitement about it to keep you fully awake. I came to see you on a little tough business, I admit, but I will reward you for it if you will make a good job of it. I was grossly insulted by that puppy who is getting more impudent every day. I refer to the — coachman of the Dives. He waylaid me this evening simply because he owes me a bill, contracted when he was yet in California. He knocked me down on the street. Youngster, if you will thrash him within an inch of his life, you will do me a big favor. I will give you ten dollars, if you will make a good job of it. I'll teach him that I take no trifling."

"All right," said the man. "I'll make a good job of it. I'll knock him down and waltz on his face when he lies on his back."

The fellow asked how he could get a hold of Felix. He was told to go to his room any evening after six o'clock and he would be likely to find him. He could call him out and give him a note, and when he was off his guard he could knock him down and "then finish the business."

One more event in Sharp's career needs to be noticed. The next day after he had instructed the young villain to attack this innocent and upright man, Sharp received a letter from the real estate agent in Omaha, stating that the house in the city was sold

and the ranch was as good as sold. The letter contained a draft for \$5,000, which had been paid as a guarantee by the purchaser. He asked Sharp to have deeds made and have them properly acknowledged, and the rest of the money would be sent in due time. The sale was to be for cash. That same day Sharp bore the draft in triumph to Octavia, and got the deeds, and went to work on them at once. Octavia now had \$5,300 of her fortune in her possession. Mr. Sharp told her he would probably go to Omaha as soon as she would acknowledge the deeds, and clean up the whole real estate business, and bring her the cash.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A TRIP BY MOONLIGHT.

“ So if I live or die to serve my friend,
'Tis for my love—'tis for my friend alone,
And not for any rate that friendship bears
In heaven or on earth.”—*George Eliot.*

The driver went up the cañon to the water-fall. He felt sure that he would find them there fast asleep. It would not be the first party he had aroused from sleep in that very place. When he arrived there he could scarcely credit his eyes when they informed his intellect that the people were really not there. Against the side of the perpendicular wall of rock there leaned an old, slimy, delapidated ladder. He had seen this on former journeys to the cañon. It had no doubt been made years ago by some miners, who felt sure that if there were “a pocket” in the rock above, over which the water poured, they would find gold in “the pocket.” He wondered how they had succeeded, even whilst he approached the old ladder to see whether anybody had disturbed the slime and moss upon it. He turned away in disgust, saying, “ Might know no ladies could climb that old—nor men either,” he added, without finishing his sentence. He thought long and deeply, then he rose, looked for the sun, and toward the top of the huge gray mountain. He could not imagine what had

become of his party. He concluded that there was only one thing to do, that was to go back to his team and wait. He had no revolver, he thought to himself, and whilst there might be no mountain-lions or anything else to disturb him, he would rather have been armed, because he did not know how long it might be before he could leave the place. He did not even then dream that he had an all-night job on hand.

A while after the moon had risen, the old man carefully secured his horses, lit his pipe and proceeded up the cañon. "Pears to me this is sorter taken one's life in hes hans. Cats is awful bold sometimes. Wonder whether them fellows has arms. Gess they has, likely as not." Thus our friend soliloquized as he proceeded up the cañon. When he was near the falls he heard the pistol shot to which we alluded in a former chapter. It had been fired by Carrie's hero as a signal that he had reached the top of the mountain. Those who were huddled around the fire at the bottom did not know what it meant. It might mean that some wild animal had been encountered, or that he who went to seek for them food was lost both to them and to the man at the carriage half a dozen miles away. There was but one thing they could do. It was to wait and see.

When the old man heard the shot, he said, "Just as I expected. They are lost." He concluded that the very best thing for him to do was to shout. He did so, and that like a Comanche. If it had been daylight, he could have seen Carrie's hero picking his way along

the trail. As it was he did not see him, nor did our friend hear his whoops. He, however, felt encouraged, and wondered whether it would be possible for him to drive along the narrow mountain road by moonlight. We have already seen that there was no occasion for worrying on that score. The old man sat down on a stone and waited a while, listening for some more noise. When the mind is intently fixed on any particular subject for a time, drowsiness may ensue. Especially is this the case when he who tries so to fix his mind, is fatigued. The old man had not listened very long before he was asleep.

Our friend was still coming nearer. In the quiet night he heard first a murmur. It became louder every moment, until his soul was filled with joy as he realized that it was the water-fall. Yes, he was on the right road. He would soon be at the little stream which they had crossed more than eight hours ago. Sure enough, there was the stream. Its water sparkled in the moonlight. He ran to the little stream. He leaped it, and as he did so he gave a yell that could have been heard a mile away. He had jumped right against the old man who was sitting on the trail upon a big stone, fast asleep. The shadow of the overhanging branches of the tree beneath which he sat, had concealed him from the young man, who, with a heart leaping for joy that he had so nearly accomplished half of his journey, had jumped upon the prostrate form. The old man, who did not know what had occurred in addition to his being knocked over,

scrambled up and began to beat the air, whilst at the same time he gave short, hoarse cries, which betrayed how thoroughly frightened he was. Our friend kept out of the reach of his fistic fusillade.

He soon recovered from his own fright and made himself known to the old man. He told him briefly how they had lost their way that evening, and that the others were awaiting his return on the other side of the hill. The old man proposed that he take the lunch basket to them. Our friend said: "You could not find them if you did. Have you ever crossed the mountain?" The old gentleman confessed that this was one of the few mountains in the state that he had not crossed. "It is a very tiresome journey. It took me three hours to make it empty-handed. It will take fully as long to return. If it were not for the moon it would be impossible to do it to-night."

The old man suggested that he would go to the carriage for the baskets, and that the younger should rest until he returned. Our friend saw the wisdom of his suggestion, but charged him to bring both baskets. In a minute more the old man was gone. In a few moments the sound of his footsteps was lost in the distance.

The driver soon returned. When he came up they opened the two baskets and took out of them the best of the food that still remained. They sorted the dishes into one, then packed the food, together with the coffee-pot, into the other. In had not required many moments before the preparations were complete.

The old man had brought a strap with him. He slipped the handle of the basket on our friend's arm. Then he passed the strap between the handle and the basket and around our friend's neck. "There, now you will find that much easier. You can use both hands, ef you need them, and still hold the vittals," he said.

Once more Carrie's hero started up the trail. The old man watched him as far as he could see, which was not very far in the uncertain light of the moon. When he could no longer hear him as he started the loose stones down the trail, he turned and walked slowly down the cañon toward the carriage, for he, too, was beginning to feel tired. When he reached the carriage he shoved the seats together, and lying down flat upon the cushions he had placed at the bottom of the carriage, and using the robes for covering, he fell asleep and heard nothing more of the world. When he awoke the sun was already up, and the horses were neighing for something to eat. He crawled up from beneath his cover, rubbed his eyes and looked about him. He could see no traces of his party. He concluded that they would come ere long, so he watered his horses, and began getting ready for a start which he was anxious to make at the earliest moment possible.

Out on the mountain there were three people who were more anxious than the guide. It is needless to say that they did not sleep. They were too anxious about themselves and their friend's return to care to

sleep, tired as they were. They kept up the fire all the night, because it was too cold to do otherwise, and because they felt safer. They sat in the uncertain light of the moon and the fire like the three fates. Carrie once jokingly remarked that there was positively nothing on that mountain or in the cañons that would not be afraid of them. She had scarcely finished her sentence when there was a loud screech in the tree a few rods away from them. Jennie clasped Dr. Burns' arm. He remembered what the hero had done under similar circumstances a few hours ago. He promptly pulled out his revolver, and bidding the girls to keep quiet he stepped in the direction from which the cry had come. He thought he saw a dark object, and fired; but with the shot the branch of an adjacent tree shook, a big object leaped from it across the strip of moonlight upon another tree fully twenty feet away. They all knew it was a wild-cat. By and by the dawn began to appear, and they hoped that Carrie's hero would soon be there.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BACK FROM THE MOUNTAINS, AND OFF TO THE SEA.

“ See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another.”—*Shelley*.

Our friend was soon well on the way to the trio who were anxiously awaiting his return. He found the ascent much more difficult with his basket on his arm, (although it was partly supported by the strap around his neck) than when he went up before with the rest. There were several reasons for this. Then it was daylight. Much has been said about the beauty and the poetry of the moonlight walk; but after all the sun furnishes the best light for mountain climbing. Then too, the first time he made the ascent he was not in the least fatigued. He then felt as if he could walk all the rest of the afternoon and not weary. Now he had not only walked all of the afternoon but also the greater part of the night, and that with great anxiety for himself and those who were entrusted to his care. Reason as he might with regard to his share of the responsibility for their losing the way on the mountain, he felt that if anything should happen to Carrie or to Jennie, he would not be able again to look into the face of Mr. Dives. It was thus that the power of thought, the “magic of the mind,” made the road

less wearisome as the hero slowly dragged himself towards the top of the mountain.

At last he came to the wall of rock. He had dreaded this every time he thought of it. He looked at the wall as it stood between him and his path beyond. His eye looked in vain to find a place less abrupt. He reasoned that if there would have been a way to avoid it in the ascent, the first person whose footsteps trod that path would have found that way. The next would have followed it, and so on. In this world most people are like geese, they follow a well trodden path. Now and then there is a gander bold enough to leave the flock and try a path of his own. Sometimes such a gander comes back to tell his experience. More frequently he doesn't. It is difficult to tell to which of the geese the world owes the more, to those who leave the beaten path or to those who remain in it. We like to speak of what those have done who left the path; but we forget to speak of what those have done who remained in it.

He managed to climb the rock and having accomplished this, he felt that the hardest part of his journey was over. He soon reached the summit of the mountain. Going along the top a few hundred yards, he realized that the moon had lost herself behind a bank of clouds, and that he was really walking by the light of the new-born day. The peaks to the east of him were already being touched by the quivering fire of the coming sun. He drew his pistol from his pocket and fired straight up toward the stars that had as yet not all

faded in the light of the oncoming morn. In a few moments there was the echo of a shot from the cañon below. His heart leaped for joy because he felt all were safe. He hastened forward. His haste might have cost him dearly. He almost tumbled over the corresponding wall of rock of which we have spoken. Having stopped in time to save himself, he found this wall was not so difficult as the one he ascended. It is nearly always easier to descend than to ascend. The stopping may be attended with worse consequences. This is true in the moral world as well as in the physical. About twenty minutes after the wall of rock was left behind, our hero stepped up to the fire around which the three sat.

The girls made their toilet at the creek, whilst the doctor put water into the little coffee-pot and set it on the fire. He also spread the cloth and arranged the food upon it. When the girls returned, they looked pleased. The coffee was soon made and the four sat down to their breakfast. It is true they suffered from exposure and had taken some cold, yet they were comparatively comfortable. The warm coffee invigorated them. The table was soon cleared and the remainder of the food carefully put away. Carrie mockingly said, it might be a week before they got back to the city, and the strictest economy must be practiced.

They all agreed that the very earliest moment, was the best to make the climb up the mountain. After the three had walked a while they felt less weary than when they started. In four hours after they began

their climb they stood safe and sound around the carriage, waiting for the last strap to be adjusted, before they began the drive back to the city. It was one o'clock when they stepped out of the carriage in front of the cousin's home. The men went to their hotel to rest the remainder of the day and the ladies went to bed. The doctor had recommended that, and it was a direction which they were heartily glad to comply with. So ended the journey which had cost them much anxiety and considerable exposure and inconvenience.

Two weeks had now passed away since they left their Colorado home. Mr. Dives expected them back in another week. Only one of the little party had seen the Pacific, and she had seen it on a former visit. They must see the great ocean, and bathe in it before they returned. The day after their return from the mountain was the Sabbath. The party went to church in the evening, and before they parted, they agreed to go to Catalina on the following Tuesday.

A word with regard to "Santa Catalina Island" to which our friends were going, will be necessary for some of our readers. Fifty years after Columbus made his first voyage to America, Cabrillo, a Spanish navigator, discovered what is now the chief sea-side resort off the Pacific Coast. When it was first discovered it was densely populated with the aborigines. These were gradually driven from their island homes by adventurers, freebooters and pirates. The full, true history of the islands never has and never will be writ-

ten. Truth is always stranger than fiction. It is especially so with the events that have occurred on and around these islands for the last four hundred years.

The largest of the group of these islands off the coast is the one already referred to, namely, "Santa Catalina," as the old Spaniards named it. It numbers about 55,000 acres of mountain land, with here and there a little valley among the hills. The hunting is excellent. Quail abound. The wild goat, almost as sure footed and daring as the chamois, lives in the mountain fastnesses. He loves to poise upon the highest cliffs that overlook the deep, blue sea. Whatever may be said of the hunting, it is excelled by the fishing. It has been well said, that the bay at Avalon is the fisherman's paradise. This is the home of the black sea-bass, or Jew-fish, as it is sometimes called. It attains a weight of five hundred pounds and is one of the gamiest fishes of the Pacific. Here also the ordinary fisherman can take with hook and line the yellow-tail, the salmon of Southern California.

The sail-boat that rides the usually calm sea off the shores of Avalon, (the town in the pretty pocket of the mighty hills,) carries its occupants over a perfect fairy land, from fifty to three hundred feet below the surface of the waters. The mosses and other plants wave in graceful bends above the rocks and earth to which they cling. Among them glide the fishes of every hue and size. On a calm day, and the days are nearly always calm here in summer and winter, the boatman can see this fairy land without any effort

whatever. The sight once seen is never forgotten. We cannot speak of all the attractions of Santa Catalina. The famous ancient quarry, the Indian town-sites, Clear Water Cañon, the Indian Cavern, and many other places on the island are every year visited by hundreds. The bathing in the bay is all that can be wished in summer and in winter. It is therefore no surprise that our friends desired to make a trip to this wonder-land.

On Tuesday morning, as planned, they took the train in the city of Los Angeles and in about five hours they disembarked on the wharf at Avalon. The actual voyage by steamer occupied them only three hours. The waters, like those of the British Channel, have a peculiar tendency to make one feel as though he were spinning with the rapidity of a top, when he is in reality sitting quietly on deck, wishing that he would have stayed at home. Of course the entire party was sick. Even the grave and dignified doctor, who knew so much about the different medicines good for sea-sickness, paid his first compliments to the great deep. He attributed their sickness to their exposure and irregular meals when on their mountain trip. No doubt that was one cause, but whatever was the cause, the remedy which never fails, was stepping on the shore. When the passengers are sick this is always the most pleasant part of the voyage. It was so in this case. What cared they for the flying fish that rose and fell out of and into the blue seas over which they were being borne! What cared they for the fact

that every now and then a little fountain rose out of the bosom of the waters and showed where a whale was sporting in briny deep! They were glad when the voyage was ended, as sea-sick people are always glad.

We cannot dwell upon the experiences of the little party during their brief stay on the island. We cannot tell of all the fun they had in pulling out from their native elements the "strange, astonished-looking, angle-faced, dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea," that had "gulped salt-water everlastingly." In the case of our party, as is generally the fact, though they had been very sick, they had gotten over their illness soonest, and became passionately fond of the water. The doctor had learned to row some years before on the Schuylkill, when he was attending the university. He was out of practice, but soon became familiar with the oars again. Carrie's hero knew how to swim and row and sail. He had learned on lake Michigan. The girls enjoyed the trips they made in the small boats quite as well as those they made by land. They had heard of Pebbly Beach, and the day after their arrival they visited it. The water was calm, and they found no trouble in landing. They spent the greater part of the forenoon there, and resolved to visit it again before they would return to the city. Considering the brevity of their intended stay on the coast, they felt that they would better come that very evening. The afternoon was spent pleasantly enough in climbing the hill which overlooked the beach which they intended to visit that

evening. They realized that it would be next to impossible to climb the rock which, when the tide was high, was buried at its base in the sea. There are a number of paths, which by daylight lead the pedestrian, or rather climber, from the hill to the town which nestles at its base. At night, however, it is difficult to find these paths, and to keep in them when they are found. We mention these facts, because they will enable the reader to understand subsequent events.

As luck would have it, (as we sometimes say, but there is really no such thing as luck, we solemnly believe,) Jennie Dives became ill towards evening, and could not go on the proposed voyage,—a thing she very much regretted. Carrie was very anxious to revisit the place. The hero was willing to accompany her because he wished to declare once and forever his love for the girl who had already come to form a part of his very life. Dr. Burns knew that some one must remain with Jennie, who was just ill enough to be too sick to try a boat ride. He knew, too, that he, being a physician, was ~~the~~ the very person who should remain near enough to the girl to attend her should she need his services. But he wished to go with Carrie. He wanted to tell her that the position as queen of his home and heart was still open. He, too, wished to decide his fate with the girl, who, since he had met her black-eyed cousin, was not as pretty as she had seemed a few weeks before. We do not say that he had lost his love for her; but we do say that he con-

fessed in his heart that Jennie was almost as sweet a girl, and even prettier than Carrie. Carrie's nature was more decided. She was stronger in every way. A man who once really loves a woman, will love her forever, provided he has the slightest hope of winning the object of his affections. Though when he finds his affections have been misplaced, he reluctantly transfers them to another and more worthy object. It was so with Dr. Burns, although he did confess to himself that Jennie might be to him equally dear; he was at that point where, should Carrie refuse to accept his hand and heart, he would see new beauty and loveliness in Jennie.

Because Dr. Burns wished to decide his fate he was anxious to accompany Carrie. He was cruel enough to her hero to whom Carrie was all and in all, and who felt that if he would be spurned in his offer of heart and hand to Carrie, he would never love another woman,—he was cruel enough to this man to propose that they pull sticks as to who was to stay with Jennie. He made this proposition in the presence of the girls. Jennie, without a murmur, thought it a happy idea. She cut the sticks and held them in her hand. Carrie shook her head in disapproval toward her hero, who gave her an appealing look. But even whilst they were deciding not to submit to the Doctor's proposition that the man who drew the longer stick should remain, he himself had already drawn that very stick. He threw it aside with a feeling of disgust which he illy concealed. Of course Carrie's hero was pleased. He

did not make much attempt to conceal his pleasure. Doctor Burns saw this and felt provoked at himself that he had made the proposition.

They were standing on the beach when the doctor pulled his stick. Carrie and her hero immediately stepped into the row-boat and pushed off, promising to be back in two hours. It was not quite six yet, and they would have ample time to return before dark.

Jennie and the doctor stood on the beach watching them as they went first directly toward the Los Angeles coast. They went so far in this direction that Jennie and the Doctor thought that they were either fooling them or had changed their minds. The hero rowed out so far in order that he might entirely clear the rocky head-land, and then row south until he got opposite the beach they intended to visit. This was wise, because the tide was coming in, and the sea was rather rough. When at last the boat turned, Carrie waved her handkerchief in a final adieu, and they were soon lost to view. The Doctor and Jennie turned and walked to the hotel. They ascended the stairs and sat on the balcony on the second floor, upon which the girls' rooms were located. Jennie soon excused herself and the Doctor went to the reading-room.

The Doctor took from his pocket a little book and began to read. He read quite a while and then he strolled down to the beach. A number of boats came in whilst he was standing there; but his friends were not in the number. It was now eight o'clock, and time for them to come. He almost envied the hero

when he thought that he might even then be pouring out his heart at Carrie's feet. The sea, he noticed, was rougher than it had been the previous evening. Turning to the man who had the boats in charge, he asked him whether the water was not a bit rough? He replied that it was decidedly so. Then he told him that two of his friends had gone to Pebbly Beach, whether it were possible for him to walk along the shore until he got there? The man told him that it was not possible in day time and at low tide. It certainly was not possible at night and when the tide was running as high as it was that night. He added: "If your people are not good rowers they will be capsized. If they were on the beach an hour ago already, they will not be able to get their boat out on account of the breakers. If they are on the beach now they will stay until morning. It is almost impossible to climb the head-land and walk back to Avalon for persons that are not better acquainted than your people evidently are. If they do not arrive before eleven o'clock, then come to me and report."

The doctor returned to the reading-room in deep study. What would he do to help them in case they needed his help? If they were on the beach it would be next to impossible to get away. Another night of exposure might mean much even for Carrie's hearty constitution. If they were in the boat—He shuddered at the thought. He tried to read, but he took very little interest in what his eyes saw on the printed page. When it was nine o'clock he went down to the wharf

once more. "My friends have not returned," he said to the man with whom he had had the dialogue an hour before.

"You cannot do anything for them. They are either at the bottom of the sea, or on Pebbly Beach trying to climb the bluff. You can take a two hours walk and swing a lantern from the rock and tell them to be brave and hunt a dry spot until the tide goes out," said the man.

He again returned to the hotel. Would he waken Jennie? Her exposure in the mountain and her loss of sleep had made her nervous and to tell her that her cousin was exposed to a new and worse danger than the one they had shared, would be more than she could bear. Might they not even now be locked in each others arms and be down where he had seen the big fish swim? But the hero could swim. He had floated like a log that very day half way between the shore and the Sugar Loaf (a high rock at the entrance to the harbor at Catalina) without any effort. It might be different now, in the big waves, with a helpless girl in his arms. This trip had brought *them* some pleasure. It had brought *him* little else than disappointment and anxiety. He wished he had staid at home. He would go down to the beach and see what could be done.

The man told him he might organize a party of searchers to go by land. It would assist the strangers in finding the village. The tide was now full, and he himself would take a boat and row to the beach indi-

cated. If they were drowned the boat would in all probability be there. They too would be washed up by the waves, in case they had not gone down too far from shore. If that were so, the boat as likely as not would be at the bottom too. He would have cautioned them, he said, if he would have known that Pebbly Beach was their destination so late in the day. But it was too late to talk about it now. Dr. Burns went away from the shore with a heavy heart. The girl he loved was without doubt no more. And her father! He had seen him wring his hands when he stood by the side of the young man now with Carrie, wherever that might be, when he lay unconscious after saving her from the run-away. Why had she not died then, instead of now?

When the doctor came to the hotel he told the night-clerk what had happened. The latter at once summoned one of the waiters who knew the island thoroughly. He told him that a searching party must be made up and proceed to the high rock to see if they had landed and climbed the steep sides which was quite possible by day, for persons acquainted with the place. Three persons armed themselves with lanterns and the usual bottle of stimulants, should they find them in a state of exhaustion. The doctor insisted that he must accompany them.

Just as they were ready to start Jennie summoned the doctor. He went to her room and found her dressed. She said: "They have not returned. Something has happened, I know. I dreamt they had fallen into the sea, I saw Carrie's black hair float on the top of the

waves. He had her in his arm, and they were sinking. When I got awake and found that Carrie was not at my side in bed, I knew that my dream was true. They are drowned, I know it. Oh! Doctor, what will we do?"

The doctor tried to soothe the girl by telling her that she dreamt so, because she was not quite well herself, and that the hero was a good swimmer, and would not let Carrie drown. But his words had little effect. He told her that three men were waiting for him down stairs, and that he would accompany them to search for the missing friends. It was with difficulty that he gained the girl's consent to go. She feared he would be lost too. With their lanterns, the four started on their search. But they had not gone far before the man who rowed to the beach arrived there. He struck his light, jumped on the shore, secured his boat, and after walking along the shore he saw their boat bottom-side up, on the beach. He exclaimed, "As I expected!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

“ Our dearest hopes in pangs are born
The kingliest Kings are crown'd with thorns.”

—*Massey.*

We have seen how the man who had rowed to Pebble Beach found the boat in which Carrie and her hero had gone forth. The oars were lying one of them, not far from the boat, the other had been cast high and dry upon the shore at some distance from the boat. The man looked carefully along the beach for some signs of the missing couple. He could find no traces. Either the boat was capsized at some distance from the shore and the two went to the bottom, or they had swam to the beach and gone along the rocks until they gained a place to climb the mountain. From where the boat lay the latter supposition was scarcely probable. He shouted at the top of his voice, but there was no reply. He knew that he could not be heard at any distance, yet he thought there might be a bare chance that they were close by, and too exhausted to help themselves. Finally he embarked and rowed rapidly toward the pier at Avalon.

The party which had gone overland climbed the hill east of the town very carefully. They waved their lights every now and then and shouted. Finally they

arrived on the top of the bluff which overlooks the sea. The man in the boat who was then already on his way home saw the lights; but he had put out his own light and gave no sign of recognition. He did not wish to mislead those who were searching by land.

After they had carefully looked along the bluff and thrown the light along the jagged edge to make sure that the waves had not brought their dead bodies and cast them upon the cruel rocks, they continued their search along the bluff. They descended the rugged sides with difficulty. At last they stood beside the boat where the boat-keeper had stood half an hour before them. They too looked for evidences from which to form an opinion as to what had become of the people, or where in all probability their boat had been capsized. There seemed but one conclusion. They were evidently drowned. The boat had no doubt been capsized some distance from the shore, and they drowned in deep water. They felt that there was no hope.

Doctor Burns staggered to a rock and sat down holding his head between his hands. In the end he thought to himself, a stick no longer than a finger had decided his destiny. Carrie and her hero had gone together, and together they had found a watery grave. How was he to tell Jennie that her dream was realized? They were indeed drowned. How was he to break the news to Mr. Dives, that the idol of his heart was shattered, that the light of his Carrie's eyes which had been the guiding star of his joy ever since his wife had died, had now forever gone out? The

doctor was unutterably sad. But in the midst of his sad thoughts a new hope arose. It came so suddenly and unexpectedly to him, that he felt that some unknown power had whispered it to his soul. Rousing himself, he said: "Boys, I tell you, we have missed them. They are not dead. They climbed this hill three hours ago, and in some way we passed them. Let us return. We will find it so. Depend upon it."

One of the searchers said, "We certainly hope you are right; but we fear you will be disappointed. We will go back now. There is no use in staying here any longer. They will not be found here for many days. By and by they may be picked up. But we will not walk back. Let us row back." They carried the boat to the water. They adjusted the oars and when the three were in, the spokesman whom we have just quoted shoved off, and they were soon at sea. The tide was now perceptibly going down along the shore and the swell was no longer heavy. One pair of oars easily managed the boat. In half an hour they touched land. The first words they heard as they stepped on shore was, "The lady and gentleman are here. They are both in bed, but very much exhausted. They came half an hour ago."

On the edge of the town of Avalon there is a fine residence. It is really part way up the hill, and the person who lives there has a splendid view of the town of Avalon that nestles in the little vale, and of the bay and the sugar-loaf and rocky headland that forms the shelter of the bay to the northward. On

the evening to which we allude in the annals of this chapter, the man who lives there had already retired. He was awakened out of his sleep by a knock at his door. He wondered what late visitor could be disturbing his slumber; but he raised the window and asked what was wanted. The voice of a man replied: "A lady and a man have met with a great misfortune. The lady is perfectly exhausted. Can you let her rest a little while, and give her something to strengthen her?" The man was soon at the door. When he opened it, he saw a young man and woman. The woman had evidently had on a light dress; but it was stained with mud to the very waist. Her hands were bleeding, and she looked the very picture of woe. The young man who supported the girl clinging to his arm was also very muddy, but his clothes were darker, and his plight was not so perceptible. His hands were also bleeding.

They were ushered into the house; and then the man saw that they were both wet from head to foot, and that the man had lost his hat. Their host gave them stimulants, and they were soon much stronger. Of course they explained why they were in such a condition; but as the account given to Jennie and the doctor was much fuller we will listen to that. After they had rested a little they were directed to the hotel by the gentleman who had received them into his home. As soon as they arrived they were helped to their rooms. Carrie went to bed immediately. Her hero who had but one suit of clothing with him to the

island was compelled to do the same; for necessity demanded that his clothes be cleaned so as to make them fit to wear.

Jennie had gone to the beach in the vain hope that the boat might yet bring her friends to shore. She had staid there until the boat-man returned from his fruitless voyage. She was wringing her hands in hopeless agony when the joyful news was imparted to her, that Carrie was in her room and was inquiring for her. At first she thought that she had been brought home dead, and that they were trying to impart the dreadful news to her as gently as possible. When she opened the door and saw Carrie stretch her arms toward her from the bed, she rushed into the embrace of the prostrate girl, and almost smothered her with kisses. She cried and laughed alternately. She felt that she must see the hero as she had learned to call him. She said to Carrie, "Is he your hero still?" The girl replied, "He is the hero anew to-night as you will confess when I tell you how he saved me. He always *will be my hero*," she added.

Dr. Burns soon examined his fair patient in the other room. He found her respiration normal, and skin cool and moist. So far no evil consequences had followed her long tramp in wet clothing through the night air. Her hands were swollen and painful. He did all he could to make her comfortable. He did not ask her to tell him how it had happened. He knew that it would exhaust her to try to narrate the terrible experience.

Jennie of course could not sleep until she knew it all. Let us listen to Carrie as she tells her all she passed through in the awful voyage and return overland to the hotel: "We went out pretty far, as you saw. As long as we went against the sea we felt no unpleasant effects from the swell; but even when you saw us turn, the boat caught a little water. The hero said: 'We had better go back, Carrie;' but I said, 'We will go on. If we come back now they will laugh at us.' He then kept the boat with the swell, which seemed to be getting greater every minute. When we approached the shore I became very sea-sick. I begged him to hurry for the land. He said, 'I fear the sea is running too high to land. We cannot turn,' he added, 'or we will capsize. Sit perfectly still.' As he said this a big wave caused the boat to take water. I thought we were sinking. I jumped out into the water. I sank. But when I came up I felt that the hero clutched my arm. He, too, had jumped out. I was excited. I don't know what I did, but he says I tried to catch hold of him, but he would not let me. He knew we would both drown. He seemed to be standing in the water. He held me by the arm and kept my head from going under. The big waves would break over my head. It was so dark. Just as I felt the ground under my feet and tried to stand I was upset. That was the last I knew until I heard him say to me, 'For God's sake, Carrie, speak to me.' I remember asking him what I should say. It seemed to me as if I was only half awake. He raised me to

my feet; but I was so weak I could not stand. I then sat down on a stone. Then I felt the water come to my knees. It startled me. I got up and tried to walk backwards, but there was a big, high rock in front of me. Then I felt his arm around me, and we struggled along the high rock until we got to a place where we could stand better; but even then the water came to our knees every time a breaker came in. We struggled on, for we knew that we would drown if we did not. By and by he said, 'Now, Carrie, we must climb this hill or the water will catch us and we will never get to Colorado again.' I was so nervous I could hardly stand, but we climbed slowly up. When at last we got to the top of that dreadful hill, we rested a long time. We took off our shoes and stockings and wrung the stockings so that they would not get so cold. We found a path and followed it; but by and by we got into the scrub-oak. It was so thick that we could not stand upright, so we crept on our hands and knees. That is the reason my lawn is so muddy. There were sharp stones and thorns in the path. They cut our hands cruelly. My hero said, 'Carrie, I know that this is more terrible for you than for me, but I cannot help you one bit.' Then he burst into tears. I told him to 'never mind my hands.' At last we got out of that terrible little woods, and we were able to stand again. At the same time we saw the lights down in the town. We were so glad that we both laughed like two children. It was rather laughing and crying mixed. They say the bridge between a smile and a

tear is short; but I believe that there was no bridge at all between our tears and smiles. They came together. We continued our walk down the hill. When we once struck the path along which we had come this afternoon we got along much better."

Here Jennie interrupted her by saying, "Dear me, I think that path was steep enough that we went together this afternoon. How will you feel to-morrow? Don't you wish you would have staid at home?"

Carrie hesitated a moment, then said: "No. I am glad I went." She tried to smile; but two big tears rolled down her cheeks and her lips that had elongated into a smile broke up into a quiver.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SAD EXPERIENCES.

“Sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies.”—*Gray*.

Our friends had resolved to return to the city of Los Angeles the next morning. Jennie, in the face of the greater trouble which for several hours she felt sure had come upon her, in the loss of two of her friends, forgot that she was ill. The joy which filled her when at last she was clasped in the embrace of her own dear cousin, whom only a few moments before she thought at the bottom of the sea, had entirely cured her. The doctor had no more concern about her.

It was different with Carrie. She fell asleep in less than an hour after she had been made comfortable; but her sleep was broken up by dreams filled with distorted visions of the awful scenes through which she had passed in the evening. The result was that when morning came, instead of being refreshed by her sleep, she was very weary and feverish. The practiced eye of Dr. Burns told him that the worst was not yet. He counseled them to get ready to embark in the morning steamer, which sailed at eight o'clock for the main-land. He feared that if they did not go

then, it might be many days before they would be able to do so.

Carrie's hero had a good degree of vitality. His experience among the mountains of Colorado had made him strong and wiry. Though he had not lost his clear complexion, he was darker than when he first came to the land of great rocks, high mountains, and strong winds. Though he felt weak the next morning, he was very like himself as he rose from what had been to him a comparatively sleepless couch. The clothing, which had been taken in charge by one of the waiters of the hotel, had been cleansed, and the coat and vest were in a presentable condition; but the pantaloons were hopelessly ruined. The hero had worn them through on both knees, and they were badly stained all over from the water and the dry black dust which he had gotten upon them subsequently, in his climbing and crawling. Avalon is not famous for the number nor for the size of its clothing and gents' furnishing establishments; but the doctor had succeeded in buying a pair of overalls for our friend, and with these and a new straw hat, he looked tolerably decent. He was ready to undertake the return voyage.

Of course the news that a young man and a young lady had been drowned the night before, off Pebbly Beach had spread through the little village. Not everybody had learned that the party had not really been drowned but they had come very near it and were going to leave that very morning for the city. Those

who had learned the above facts however, were anxious to catch a glimpse of the handsome girl as she was reputed to be. There were several hundred of the idle tourists, who had nothing to do but gossip, swim and fish the livelong day, at the warf to see the party off. When the four came, Carrie upon the doctor's arm, and Jennie walking with the hero, the crowd opened to allow them to approach the steamer.

The voyage to San Pedro was quite pleasant. There were few passengers on board that morning, and those did not feel it their duty to quiz and gape. Carrie took a state room and lay down and fell asleep and dozed to the end of the voyage. The hero remained on deck. He sat alone and reviewed the experiences of the previous night. He confessed to himself that an experienced boatman would not have tried to land however much he might have been entreated so to do. He confessed too that he did not know how to put to sea without being swamped. On the whole he confessed that the trip had been badly managed. He was to blame for obeying the request of the girl to undertake the trip when he knew before he was half a dozen rods from the shore, that there was danger. He feared that the worst was not over. Carrie confessed to him: when he asked her as she went to her state-room, that she felt badly. When he arose and went to her she was still sleeping, apparently soundly. The sleep he thought would be better than all the medicine Dr. Burns could give her.

Jennie and the doctor were conversing in low tones. Our friend could not hear what they were saying; but he knew that they were talking about the experiences of the previous evening. They were blaming him, he thought, and justly so. He was not quite right. They were talking about him and the ill-fated voyage, but they rather commended him. They felt sure that if he would have lost his presence of mind, there would have been no one to return. The full particulars of how they lost their lives would never have been known to them or to Carrie's father, to whom the sad news might have been fatal. The doctor thought that it was barely possible that Carrie would escape being ill from the exposure and the strain that it must be to her nervous system. It seemed almost a miracle that she had not given up already. "It is her powerful will that keeps her up," said the doctor. "If that were you, Jennie, you would be helpless."

Whilst she was talking with the doctor, the latter took her by the arm and together they walked to Carrie's room. She was still sleeping but her cheeks were very red, and her breathing was quick and irregular. The doctor took her hand gently in his. It was dry and hot. He went to the ice-water and saturated his handkerchief and laid it on her head. He asked the steward whether there was any aconite to be had on board the vessel; but that worthy informed him that there was not. There was nothing to do but wait until they got to shore. He could procure some in the town at which they would land in

less than half an hour. The doctor stayed with the girl whose sleep had changed into stupor, and kept changing the saturated handkerchief which dried rapidly on her hot forehead.

When they arrived in San Pietro the sick girl was taken into the strong arms of the Doctor and carried to the cars. When he raised her she said, "Yes, we must both drown if we do not get away from these horrid rocks. But I can not stand." She tried to weep; but her sobs were unattended by tears. The Doctor took it upon himself to see after the sick girl. He shoved two cushions together in the cars and laid her upon them, making a pillow of his coat for her head. He sent the hero for tincture of aconite, which was promptly brought and promptly administered. When they arrived in the city in less than an hour afterwards, the Doctor again picked up the sick girl and carried her to a hack. Again she said, "Yes, we must both drown if we do not get away from these horrid rocks. I can not stand."

Of course it was a surprise to the Los Angeles cousin to see the girl brought home sick, and in a fever. The sad occurrence was soon explained to the woman. Carrie was put to bed, and the doctor went to work in earnest to break the fever. Her temperature went up in spite of his medicine. We will not try to tell our readers how he treated the case. Two days after they had come to the city, the doctor held a consultation with one of the best physicians in the city. He explained that it was not because he considered

Carrie's case dangerous; but because he did not wish to take all the responsibility himself. The first evening they were back in the city, Dr. Burns himself wrote a letter. The following is a copy:

"LOS ANGELES, CAL., 6: 16, '9-.

MR. DIVES,

*

Dear Sir:—

The girls and your book-keeper wish me to say that they would like to prolong their stay another week or ten days. Carrie is not so well. She is feverish. We were to the sea-side and she probably staid in the water too long. This, together with the unusual experiences through which we have all passed, causes her to be indisposed.

Very Truly,

DR. BURNS."

The Doctor had told the truth; but he had not told the whole truth. He explained, that if the case should become serious he would telegraph at once. He did not wish to distress her kind father's heart unnecessarily. He did not anticipate anything serious. It was only the nervous strain, the exposure, and the salt water, he hesitatingly added, which she had swallowed, that was causing the trouble. Nature would assert herself in a few days. Whatever Dr. Burns might say with regard to the fact that Carrie's case was simple and without any apparent danger, his actions belied his words. He was anxious. Jennie knew it and so did the hero.

The letter had been mailed to Mr. Dives on Friday

evening. On the following Tuesday the following dispatch was sent to Carrie:

“DEAR DAUGHTER:—

Must have the hero immediately. All come if possible. Sambo sick. Lovingly,
YOUR FATHER.”

There was but one thing to do. The hero must go at once. He could not go that day anymore; but in the morning at seven he would be off. It was his last night with Carrie. He would watch with her alone. It would be some relief to Jennie and the rest to get a solid night's sleep. The Doctor consented. The hero staid alone with the girl. All that night he and his sorrow watched by the fever-stricken girl. How he longed to have her speak to him but one rational word, give him but one rational look. Once he took both her hands in his and whispered into her ear, “Carrie, do you not know me.”

She answered, “Yes, I know you.” She really was conscious, he thought, and a thrill of pleasure passed over him. He was about to ask her another question, but the fact that she knew him, that her mind was lucid, had been such a happy surprise, that his intellect now struggled to express in a word the dearest sentiment of his heart. As the bird long caged, suddenly sees the door of its cage swung open, inviting it to soar in freedom to its mates, sits paralyzed with the possibilities unimproved, until the hand of its captor shuts the door, and it remains a helpless prisoner, so the pent up affections of our friend saw in Carrie's

"Yes, I know you," an opening through which the intense longing of his heart might enter the girl's soul; but he waited too long to frame the thoughts of his heart into words. Before he could speak, she added: "Yes, we must both drown, if we do not get away from these horrid rocks. But I can not stand." Then she began to sob. He knew well that language. It had been among the first words she had spoken when he was bending in helpless agony over her at the foot of the cliff. The tears fell silently upon the face of the girl, as he raised his head. Rapidly the hours of the night of watching passed away. The nurse that sits and watches by the bed of suffering, counts in weariness the hours of the night as the clock tells them one by one. To the hero the passing of each hour, as it was announced by the solemn old clock that stood in the hall below, fell upon his ears as does the grating of the key in the lock on the felon's cell, when the day of execution is at hand. It seemed almost like dying to leave the girl he so tenderly loved behind him. Would he ever see her alive? The thought, as it came and came again all that night, filled him with a nameless dread. He would not have had the question answered, though the oracles of heaven opened their mysteries to him, for fear that the answer might be what he dreaded. Promptly at six and a half o'clock the hero, in the presence of them all, took the girl's hand in his and then let it slide out of his grasp:

CHAPTER XL.

SOMEBODY IN THE HOUSE IS DEAD.

"God's finger touched him and he slept."—*Tennyson*.

The reader may think it strange that our friend should have been willing to leave the girl he loved, when she was so ill; but it must be borne in mind that she was not his wife. He was in the employ of her father, and to him he owed the first duty. He had been telegraphed for and it was necessary that he go immediately. Jennie had promised to telegraph him every day in case Carrie got worse. If she improved she would not telegraph; but she would write him a few lines each day stating whether she was improving rapidly. The doctor told him that there was no reason to suppose that the fever would not leave her as suddenly as it had come. If she would have taken pneumonia it would be different; but so far as he could tell there was no organic disease.

If she was worse he was to receive his first message at The Needles. He was very anxious to see whether there would be a message. When the train arrived at the place nearly twenty-four hours after leaving Los Angeles, he eagerly rushed into the telegraph office and inquired whether there was a dispatch for him. The operator without making a reply handed him a tele-

gram. He trembled so violently when he walked away, and fumbled so nervously to open it that the operator who was watching him, called after him, "Good news, my friend. Don't borrow trouble." He felt as if a great weight were rolled off his heart. He tore it open and read, "Carrie is much better this morning. She asked where you were."

He turned toward the window of the office, and said to the operator, "I am very much obliged." That person was attending to some other business and paid no attention to him; but the hero was just as happy. The dispatch had made him so happy that he was entirely different from what he had been the day before. He talked to everybody he met. Those who had noticed his demeanor the day before, thought at first that he had taken more than coffee for his breakfast. It is ever so. The greatest joy is born frequently of deepest sorrow. Trouble is but the servant of happiness. He often goes before to prepare the heart to enter for happiest realizations. On the other hand, sometimes sorrow comes back to the heart that has just entered joy, as the clouds come over the face of the sun, when she has just broken into smiles of light. It was so with our friend's sorrow. Though the cloud had lifted and the sun of joy was shining in his soul and he rested well the following night, the morning brought a cloud. At Trinidad he received another message which read, "Carrie is worse; but say nothing to her father. Unless she becomes serious I will not again telegraph."

†

How he longed to ask just how she was; whether her fever was worse or whether it was broken, and the extreme weakness which he felt sure would come upon her when she again became conscious, had come to her? He could only sit and think all that day.

When he got to the little station to which we have so often come with the Dives and their friends, it was almost dark, and there was no one to meet him. There was no telegram to tell him that Carrie was worse. This in itself was a joy. He resolved to walk to the stone house that evening, though he knew that there was no moon. He got his supper at the little hotel and started.

When he arrived it was long after dark, and the house was quiet. There was one light and that, strange to say, was in the parlor. He would go to the parlor and make his arrival known. Mr. Dives must have friends there. But whom could he be entertaining in the parlor when Carrie was not at home? Why did he not have them in the office? All of Mr. Dives' friends who had come to see him since he was in his employ had always come on business. He would not invite them to the parlor even when Carrie was home unless the trains compelled them to stay all night. These thoughts passed through his brain almost as rapidly as does thought fly when on the wings of a dream. He arrived at the door. He knocked. There was no response. Mr. Dives had lit the light because he expected him or the doctor to come and announce the arrival of the party. He would try the door. As

he put his hands on the knob he felt the soft meshes of cloth. It was quite dark and so was the cloth. He felt that it was tied with a ribbon. The truth burst upon him. It was a crape! At the same instant the little sentence in Mr. Dives' telegram flashed across his mind, "Sambo sick." "Sambo dead," he exclaimed to himself. He went to the hall door and rang the bell. The house in which the Dives lived was so arranged that doors led off the porch directly into the parlor, the dining room, the kitchen, and the office. The hall door was between the parlor and the dining room.

Mr. Dives himself came to the door. He grasped the book-keeper's hand at the same time asking, "Are you alone?" The book-keeper answered, "Yes," and at the same instant added, "Sambo is dead?"

"Sambo is dead," solemnly added Mr. Dives, whilst a big tear rolled down his cheeks and was followed by another and another.

The book-keeper thought of the colored boy, and of another and a more mutual trial which he must share with the man who sat before him, and who was unable to say anything for several moments. When he did find his voice he inquired, as the clerk expected he would, after his own child. The young man very calmly told him their experience on the mountain and the greater part of their awful calamity at Pebbly Beach. He drew from his pocket the dispatches he had received and showed them to Carrie's father. The old gentleman read them and thought a while, then he

said: "No doubt good medical attendance will save Carrie's life. You went through the same experience, and here you are. If the Master wills it so, she too will come back to her home, alive and well." Mr. Dives' words which breathed such calm confidence in his daughter's ultimate recovery, inspired new confidence in the heart of her lover. He turned to the old gentleman and said, "Sambo?"

"Ah Sambo, he alas, is dead." More tears rolled down his cheeks, but he told his young friend how it all came to pass that the strongest in all that house was now stark and stiff in death. The very day that Carrie and he had escaped so narrowly from a watery grave, Mr. Dives sent Sambo with the spring-wagon to the station to bring some goods which had been shipped him from Denver. Sambo drove the same mustangs which so nearly caused the book-keeper's own death. It was not the first time that he had driven them alone. Sambo was a good horseman. He could handle a team quite as well as anyone on the ranch. In some way the horses took fright. They had evidently been hitched quite awhile and when he started they were anxious to get home. The track made by the wheels for fully a hundred rods before the accident, showed that they were going at a break-neck speed. He had driven on the bank first on one side of the road and then on the other, until he came to the very place where the book-keeper was thrown as he caught the runaways. "But," said Mr. Dives, "you were not there to risk your life, nor was there

anyone else there to save the boy from a horrible death. The mark of the wheels show that the one horse must have been on the bank for some distance. Instead of crowding the other one to the opposite side of the road, the left one, to save himself from turning too short, must also have jumped up on the bank, which of course knocked the one on the right, over the high bank. The wagon, Sambo and the one horse went down to the creek. The other horse with the collar and bridle still on came into the yard. Jim happened to be here, and he mounted Carrie's sorrel and rode out to the wreck. He found the wagon and one horse lying dead against the big rock to which you once alluded, when we were driving along there. You said, 'That will make a hard bed for somebody some day.' Poor Sambo did not even do as well as he might have done, if that rock would have become his bed. He fell to the bottom, or rolled down. When Jim found him his back was broken, the muscles of his neck injured, and his right limb fractured. He was also injured internally. He was conscious and in great pain. Jim could not get him up alone, so he came to the house and we hitched to the carriage, took some bandages and drove out. I sent Jim on to the station to telegraph for the doctor who has taken Burns' place during his absence. I climbed down the bank to where Sambo lay.

"The first words he spoke when he saw me were, 'Oh, Massa Dives, I's don for. I's neck been gone and broke.' Of course I knew that his neck was not

broken. I tried to help him to get up, but he screamed with pain. I did what I could for him until Jim came. We managed to get him to the carriage, and took him home. He became unconscious before we got him to the carriage, and continued so until yesterday. The doctor came early the next morning after the accident. He examined him carefully, then shook his head. He tried to bring him to recognize his surroundings; but it was no use. He lay nearly a week before he could go; but I hope he did not feel any pain, although he did groan at times. He was a faithful boy." Mr. Dives wept silently as he uttered his last sentence. The book-keeper joined him, not out of sympathy but because his own heart bled.

It seems sorrows never come singly. They go in flocks as do the birds of prey. When one is seen it is almost sure that there will be more. Who can tell whether the air will not be filled with them, before the first one will leave? So sorrows go in bunches.

After awhile Mr. Dives said, "We will bury him to-morrow. We will accompany the body to the Springs. I have resolved to bury him on my own family-lot. There is room for half a dozen. The time for retiring is long past," added Mr. Dives as he looked at the clock in his bed chamber where they were sitting. It was twelve o'clock.

The next morning the family carriage was out early. Jim did duty in Sambo's place. An undertaker from the station came and put the boy into a neat coffin,

and together the little group of mourners consisting of Hannah, Mr. Dives, and the book-keeper with Jim as driver, proceeded to the station. There the corpse was transferred to the train and all the persons mentioned accompanied it to Colorado Springs. When they arrived there, short services were held at the grave, and the body of poor Sambo was committed to the earth.

We have not yet spoken of the one who mourned the deepest for the dead boy. His own mother was heart-broken. Her affection for her boy was just as pure and deep as that of Mr. Dives for his child. He could sympathize with her when he thought of what it would mean to follow his own daughter to the grave. He prayed that he might be spared that sorrow. To Hannah, Sambo was all and in all. With his life went out all the joy from her heart. She returned to the Dives' kitchen with a crushed soul. She did her work as before, but there was no pleasure in duty or in the commendation which Mr. Dives gave her when he called her to his office a few days after the funeral, and said, "Hannah, you have been my faithful servant many years. You shall never want food or clothing whilst you live in my family. Wherever you may choose to go, if you decide to quit my home, now that your boy is gone, my blessing and good wishes will follow you, and if I hear that you are in want, my hand shall not be closed to you. If you wish to go to seek your kindred in the Sunny South I will pay your expenses. If you know of none

to seek, then remain where you are. Whether you work or not this house will shelter you."

The old woman burst into tears, as she said, " Massa Dives, whar in all de worl will I fin my 'lations? They's all dead and gon sure. I has nobody in de wide worl now 'cept Miss Carrie and you, Massa. I stay till I dies, then you 'posit my body in a grave side of Sambo and there I stay 'till de judgmen day."

CHAPTER XLI.

“CARRIE, YOU HAVE NOT ANSWERED ME THAT QUESTION.”

“Reason thus with reason fetter;
Love sought is good, but given unsought, is better.”
Shakespeare.

We have already seen that Carrie Dives improved somewhat the same day that her hero left her for their home in Colorado. We saw, too, how the very next day she was worse again. Mr. Dives did not get a letter that week before Saturday. We are sufficiently interested in the case to learn just how she felt day by day. One of the most distressing of all the worries that can torment us is to know that a friend is sick and in danger, but so far from us that we can do little to help. The fact that all the news we receive is stale and entirely inadequate to give us a full idea of the case, is still more distressing.

When Carrie's hero had been gone nearly ten hours, the fever seemed suddenly to have spent its force. She realized for the first time since her return to the city that she was really not on those “horrid rocks.” She looked about the room. She and Jennie had slept in this room when they were in the cousin's home, before they went to the sea-shore. There was the picture of a Madonna which Carrie admired very much.

Her eyes chanced to see this, and she at once seemed to recognize the fact that she was back in the city. She saw Doctor Burns sitting in front of the window and Jennie close by his side. She seemed to realize that her hero ought to be there. Her eyes sought him everywhere in the room, then fixing her gaze upon the Doctor, she said, "Is the hero sick too?" This was the first evidence that Jennie and he had that she was conscious. They were soon at her bedside. She spoke a few sentences, but seemed very weak. She soon fell into an unnatural slumber, or rather stupor, and remained in that condition all the next day. It was because she continued in this unnatural sleep, that Jennie sent the second dispatch.

Dr. Burns, who spent most of his time with Jennie in the sick room, became very well acquainted with the young lady. They had not procured a nurse for Carrie. The Doctor and the two ladies took their turns in sitting with the patient. The Doctor began to be convinced that all that was the matter with Carrie was the nervous prostration. She had taken cold; but he had been fortunate enough to keep that from going to her lungs. The fever by and by would leave her, he told Jennie, and as far as he could see, there was no reason why they should not be ready to leave the Golden State by the end of another week.

Carrie Dives was getting better. Her fever was broken, and at the end of the week she sat up a little, and took nourishment. The Doctor was very attentive. Carrie felt that she was under obligations to

him for his care of her from the time she reached the hotel until she was out of danger. She confessed that she did not know how serious her illness might have been had he not looked after her so assiduously. Of course the news had been written to the father, who loved his daughter only as a pure-minded father can love his only child, and that a sweet, true girl like Carrie. They in California and the father in Colorado had conspired to surprise the hero by coming home before he expected them. They had told him that she was out of danger, but still weak. He, on the other hand, did not think that she was as well as she really was.

One evening when Carrie was sitting by the window in the same pink wrapper which she had worn the morning she waved her hand in adieu to the Doctor as he drove away from the stone house, the Doctor came into the room, and seeing her sit, he walked up to her and clasped her warmly by the hand. He said, "Pardon me, but really I must say I have not seen you look so handsome since you came to the veranda in your own home in that same cunning dress and waved me a good-by. You looked like a mountain fairy with your long, black hair down your back." Then drawing a chair up to Carrie, he sat down beside her. They were all alone in the house. The cousin's husband had returned from his trip the day before, and he had taken his wife and Jennie out for a drive that evening. Carrie was of course too weak to accompany them.

When the Doctor had seated himself he again took Carrie's hand under pretence of feeling her pulse. He still had her little hand in his and was resting two of the fingers of his other hand on her pulse. Without a change in his countenance he looked her into the eyes, and said, "Carrie, you have not answered me that question,—will you be queen of my heart and home?"

Carrie did not flinch under his searching gaze; but her lips quivered as she said, "Dr. Burns, you have been very kind—" The effort was too much, she did not finish her sentence. The Doctor thought of what Jennie had said about proposing to a lady when she was in a man's power and under special obligation to him. He realized that he had been doing that very thing, and he felt ashamed of himself. He took the little hand between his two and patting it gently, he said, "I beg your pardon, I should not have asked you to answer me that question now. Tell me, are you engaged to anybody else?"

Carrie looked him into the face with an injured expression. She hesitated, then she shook her head and said nothing. It was all he would ask her to say, the Doctor said; "but," he added, "please do not tell Jennie. Will you promise me that?" The girl nodded assent to his request. Just then the folks who had been out for a drive came home. The Doctor moved his chair as Jennie bounded up the stairs and shouted, "How are you now, little cousin?"

Carrie replied, "Very tired, dear. I guess I will go to bed. To-morrow I hope to stay up all day."

The Doctor said, "Jennie, I left you some powders to give to your other self," as he frequently called either of the girls, when he spoke of one to the other. "You give, or see that Carrie takes one every two hours when she is awake. You must let her rest now; so come and take a walk with me; you have been out, but I have not been out, at least not with agreeable company." So Jennie put a wrap about her and together the two walked for half an hour or more, and then entered a little park which opens upon the street on which her cousin resided at the time. It was getting dark, but the evening was unusually warm for Southern California, and the Doctor said there would be no danger of taking cold, if they would sit and rest a little while. The atmosphere of the park was rich with the perfume of roses. The palms stood quiet in the deepening twilight, as if trying to rest their great, fan-like leaves before the sea-breeze of another day would twist and toss them. All was quiet save the gentle sound which the spray of the fountain close to them made, as its waters fell into the basin. The two felt perceptibly the charms of their surroundings. They walked to one of the seats and sat close together. For several moments they were both quiet, as if they had involuntarily yielded to the soporific influence of the perfumed air. The Doctor broke the silence by saying: "My! Jennie, would not this be a capital place to make love? I wonder that not all the young men

and maidens in this city come here to breathe out the tender tale of their heart's great passion. The very air is soothing. The surroundings are so quiet, so suggestive of rest."

Jennie said, "Love requires the perfume of the rose and lily. That condition is certainly fulfilled here; but where is the dove, which is also said to be a requisite, in order that the tender passion may be stirred?"

"How poetic you are," said the Doctor. "But really, Jennie, this is a delightful place to sit and dream by day and by night, asleep or awake. Suppose we make love. I will say to you that I love you. Will you be my queen, my idol, for this life and that which is to come?"

"Doctor, do not talk so silly. It does not become you to make light of the most sacred passions of the human heart."

"Suppose I mean it? Can I not tell you then?"

"You do not mean it, or you would not be so silly.

"They love indeed who quake to say they love."

"Jennie," added the Doctor, "it is true, I have spoken very silly words, but by and by I may tell you in intense earnestness, at least in substance, what I have told you now. What will you say then?"

"There will be time enough to tell you that when you speak in 'intense earnestness,' as you say. Wait and see what I will tell you."

So they talked, as young people will, about what they expected to do in the near future. The Doctor of course told Jennie that he intended to buy the house in which his office was then already located. He told her, too, of the changes he intended to make. In fact he told her substantially what he had told Carrie months before; but he did not ask her to become his "queen," as he had asked Carrie.

CHAPTER XLII.

A GREAT CRIME.

“A man who has no excuse for crime is indeed defenceless.”
—*Bulwer Lytton.*

The first of September came in due time; but the cook did not return to the Dives' home on Fifth Avenue. There was good reason for it. Toward the close of August he received a letter from Miss Susie Dives stating that the house would not be opened for the present. She was sorry that she could not inform him just when they would be ready to again enjoy his culinary art. She herself had been summoned to Colorado, and would not be back for at least a month. If he wished to call at the house about the first of October, he could do so. If she could not be home then, she would try to inform him beforehand. She added that just as soon as she knew definitely when they would again occupy the house she would let him know. They had appreciated his services during the greater part of the year that he had been with them, and would be glad to continue him, provided the delay would not inconvenience him. Susie Dives had failed to inform the cook why she was going to Colorado. He wondered why she did not tell him. We too wonder why the girl went west at the close of the summer when quite the contrary was planned. We will not

for the present follow her to Colorado, nor will we now inquire concerning our friends whom we left in the chief city of Southern California.

Octavia Newman's affairs require a word. She was at length relieved from her long and weary work at the bedside of the English lady. The dread destroyer won his way slowly but surely, and the woman finally succumbed to his wooing. After the lady was buried, Octavia went to her room in the home of the Dives. She had been given a key and could go there whenever she saw fit. It was the same afternoon that she was released from her charge. She sat down quietly, and with hands folded in her lap she began to think. First she thought of the letter which she had received from Mr. Sharp the day before, dated, Omaha, Nebraska.

The following is a copy of the paper which Mr. Sharp had enclosed in his letter:

" New York, Sept. —, '9—.

I, Octavia Newman, do hereby of my own free will empower William Sharp, Esq., to receive all money or monies due me. I fully empower him to act in my stead in every capacity which my business in my absence may demand.

Signed."

But we must not anticipate. We were watching Octavia as she sat with folded hands in her room in the home of the girls who were so kind to her. She thought of Mr. Sharp's letter, so full of anxious solicitude for her. It breathed so pure and such true affection for her. Yes, the happy day for their marriage

would soon come. Less than four months and she would be the happy bride of one of the smartest lawyers in his profession.

Finally, Octavia pulled out her watch and found that it was six o'clock. She put on her hat and gloves to go for her dinner. When she came to the front steps she saw a rough looking man running from the rear of the house. The man noticed her, and instead of stopping or saying anything to her, he pulled his hat over his eyes and ran with all his might past her to the street and away. Octavia's curiosity was aroused to see what he had been doing in the rear of the house that could make him so anxious to get away. She walked back toward the stable. She knew that Felix still kept his room up stairs not so much because he wished to be economical as because he wished to keep an eye on the property of the Dives during their absence. She thought it was about time for the young man to be at his room. She would of course not pay him a visit, but she would knock at his door and tell him of what she had seen.

When she came near the stable she saw a man lying on the grass. His face was turned upward. His eyes were shut; and to all appearance he was dead. Octavia always prided herself in her strength of nerve before she was ill. She had recovered from her sickness now and was almost as strong as ever. She recognized in an instant that the young man was none other than Felix. She walked up to him, bent down to examine his heart in order to tell if possible why he had fainted.

Then she noticed that his right side was blood-stained. She unbuttoned his coat and vest and noticed that there was a cut in them both which extended through his garments, and was the cause of his bleeding. She did not wait to see whether the stab had caused him to faint. She knew that she could do very little for him. She ran to the house, unlocked the door, and ran up to the girls' room. It was locked. She had intended to telephone for an ambulance. When she found she could do nothing there she returned to the stable. She remembered that Susie Dives had told her that Felix had telephone communication with the house and the city as well. She found the doors below on the ground entrance open, and at the head of the narrow stairs which led to his room the door stood wide open. She saw, on entering, that things were in a litter, and that the young man's hat and a light overcoat lay on the bed. Evidently he had gone out at the call of the person who had assaulted him. After the assault, the fellow had returned to the room and robbed it of what he saw fit to take with him. We do not mean that Octavia came to this conclusion at a glance; but she did feel sure that the assault had been made with the intention of robbery. (We, kind reader, know that robbery was not the primary intent of the villain.)

Octavia rang the bell and soon was placed in communication with the police headquarters. She told the man at the telephone that a robbery had been committed and a man left for dead at — Fifth Avenue.

He should please send an ambulance and the surgeon at once. After this she went down stairs. To her surprise she saw Felix sitting on the grass looking about him in a dazed manner. Then Octavia saw for the first time that there was also a gash on the back of the young man's head. She got water and washed the back of his head. She found that the wound on his chest still bled. She told him to take a deep breath. He made the attempt, then sank back in another faint. She feared that the wound had reached the lungs.

To her, waiting by the silent form of the man, it seemed as if the surgeon would never come. At last she heard the rumbling of the ambulance. She went to the front to tell the officer where to come.

Mr. Abraham who was standing on the door-step when the ambulance first passed his house, was of course curious to see where it went. When he came to the front pavement and saw that it stopped at the Dives, he went up and was horrified to see Felix brought out. He rushed to his home and communicated the sad news to his wife. In a moment she too was there. It is needless to say that Felix was carried into the home of the Abrahams instead of the hospital.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MORE DEVELOPMENTS.

“ Let guilty men remember, their black deeds
Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds.”

—*John Webster.*

When Felix was brought into the home of the Abrahams the police surgeon feared that he had received a fatal wound in the chest. He was carried by the two officers up the stairs. The doctor found, on a closer examination, that the stroke on the head had been a severe one. The skull was not fractured, but the bone was laid bare for several inches. The blow had evidently been dealt by some heavy instrument. The doctor next carefully probed the wound. It had gone diagonally after striking the uppermost rib. He felt certain that it had not reached the lung, as he at first supposed.

After his examination was finished, he applied restoratives to the unconscious form. It was not many minutes before he had the satisfaction of seeing Felix open his eyes. Then the surgeon dressed his wound and told him to remain quiet for a little while. He would be gone for half an hour or so; then he would return to see how he was getting along. Mr. Abraham now wanted to ask Felix what had hap-

pened; but the doctor forbade him by saying there was time enough for that later.

Abraham was invited to accompany the surgeon and the officer back to the home of the Dives. Octavia was still standing on the porch as if undecided where to go or what to do. When the officers and Mr. Abraham came to the house, she asked them how seriously the young man was injured. The surgeon told her that he thought the wound was simply a flesh wound. That which had caused him to be unconscious was the blow he had received on the back of his head, with some blunt instrument. They had come to investigate the premises. Octavia accompanied them to the place where she had seen Felix lying when she walked out to the stable the first time. The officer looked about him, and found in the grass near the fence a piece of an iron rod about a foot long. The end of the rod had been coiled around itself at one end. It thus formed an ugly knob. The hair of Felix, together with a little blood, proved conclusively that it had been used by the assailant. They could not find any traces of the knife with which the stabbing had been done. Evidently that had gone when the rowdy who had used it went. He had apparently thought that he had done his work efficiently. The room upstairs showed that. The fellow had thoroughly ransacked the man's trunk, and the drawers of his desk. Some of the pockets of his clothing had been turned inside out in the hope of finding something worth carrying away. The job had not been done for pleasure only.

Octavia described the fellow who had evidently done the deed. After she was through, the officers and Mr. Abraham left her. The latter invited her to call on her friend, who he said would receive the best of care. She replied that Felix was no friend of hers. She had simply become acquainted with him at the home of the Dives, as she had become acquainted with the other servants of the house. Mr. Abraham said nothing. He simply drew his upper lip between his teeth, as was his custom when he was displeased.

The surgeon accompanied Mr. Abraham to his home in the hope that he might learn a little more concerning the assault which might have cost the young man his life. They found Felix sitting in a chair when they arrived at the house. The doctor said to him: "Young man, you have evidently had a narrow escape. Can you tell us how it happened?"

Felix replied: "I had just come from my dinner and had seated myself to write a letter to a friend, when I heard a loud knock on the door outside. I opened the window and saw a villainous face turned up toward me. I asked what he wanted. The fellow replied that he had a note for me from my employer. I asked him how he had gotten the note, when he replied, that he had met Mr. Abraham as he passed the house, and he asked him to please take the note. That sounded plausible. I went down stairs, and when I arrived in front of the door he handed the paper to me, saying that he would wait for the answer. As I opened the note to read it, he stepped to one

side, and then I felt him strike me. That is all I remember."

Felix was asked to describe the man, and his description agreed with that of Octavia. The officers then left and said that if he found any clew additional to what they had, he should let them know at once. The thief evidently was well acquainted in that neighborhood.

After the officers were gone the interview which Felix had had some weeks before with Sharp occurred to him. He had not thought of it since that day. Mr. Abraham was still in the room with Felix. He told the old gentleman. The latter said, "That explains it all. Sharp, whom I do not personally know, evidently hired that man to take your life. The robbing the fellow did because he loves to rob. If I were you I would have Sharp arrested on suspicion. We will consult our attorney and see what can be done. The crime shall not go unpunished, if we can find the perpetrator."

We need scarcely mention that Felix's wounds soon healed, and he went about his business as usual, some time before the Dives returned to New York. They had not heard of the assault upon their friend before they arrived at home. Felix had asked Miss Abraham to please not communicate the information to them. He hardly knew whether to shield Sharp or not. He felt confident that the man was at the bottom of it. We, kind reader, know that he was.

Until the sixteenth of November, the day Jennie, Susie and Carrie Dives arrived in New York, the home on Fifth Avenue remained closed. Now it was to be the scene of great events in the lives of all whose acquaintance we have formed in these pages. Carrie came with her cousins to spend the winter. She was to be followed by her father and her hero for a month's stay. The cook had called on the attorney of the Dives to find out when the girls would be home. The attorney told him the day on which he might expect the girls and their cousin. He was there promptly. The truth of the matter was, he knew that he had a good place and he had resolved to hold on to it as long as he could.

Miss Octavia Newman, who had come and gone at the house of the Dives as if she were going in and out at her own home, also came the same day that the Dives arrived. She greeted the girls very cordially. It is necessary to state here, that after our party returned to Colorado, Jennie lay at the point of death for several weeks, suffering from pneumonia, which she had contracted by falling into a mountain stream, during one of their rambles. When her friends despaired of saving her life, they sent for her sister and Octavia, but the latter would not go because she (as she alleged) had already entered upon the preparation for her wedding.

"Miss Newman, we are still your friends, although you did not treat us as you should have done. Let me tell you, therefore, as a friend, that the man you

esteem so wealthy is in reality bankrupt, bankrupt not only in money, but in character. When I was to see my cousin in Los Angeles this summer, I saw his mother-in-law. She was dressed in deep mourning. She led Sharp's little child by the hand. It's mother is dead. She died of a broken heart. There is a dreadful report as to how the wicked man, Sharp, tried to rid himself of the entire family, even his precious babe. He was driven from the presence of the woman he wronged. He got no divorce, Octavia, because he hoped they would die and he would be able to get hold of his wife's money. He cannot do it now, as long as the child lives. I guess the mother-in-law will see to it that he never does."

Octavia became scarlet in her face as the girl told her of the perfidy and vileness of her intended. Jennie continued, "Oh, Octavia be warned, for God's sake be warned, and do not sell yourself soul and body to that awful man. Felix tells —. I will not say what he tells us about this man Sharp. I dare not tell you all."

"No, you dare not tell me all," said Octavia. "I would not believe the lying tongues, though you told me ten-thousand times more than you have told me. I know Mr. Sharp as well as any of those persons who try to defame and slander him," said Octavia. She was about to rush from the room, but Susie who had been a silent witness of all that the sister was telling the woman, laid her hand on her arm and detained her. She said, "Octavia, we know what we

are talking about. We would deliver you at the last moment, but we see that it is useless to try. When you have married that bad man you will know the need of friends more than you do now. You will always find our home and our hearts open to you. Do not spurn the advice of those who love you. 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,' Octavia."

The next morning after the Dives' arrival in New York, Felix was notified to appear at the police court. The officers believed that they had his assailant. Felix at once communicated the news to Mr. Legis, the lawyer of the Dives, and the two went to the court together. Felix recognized the fellow in an instant. When he told the court so, the would be murderer said, "You lie." He was reprimanded, and the evidence against him was continued. The result was that he was held for trial at the superior court.

The young villain, who was old in crime, together with his father and mother, had been suspected for some time. A number of robberies had been traced, and the police felt almost certain that they knew the right parties. They were simply waiting for sufficient evidence. Finally they had gotten the scent. They recognized the fact that the neatly dressed and professional Sharp was the real culprit. They were simply waiting to locate Sharp. He was considered the richest bird in the flock.

They had made up their minds to catch him at all hazards. But where was he? They had been to his

room a number of times; but he was always out. He had a slate on his door stating when he would be in, but he never came as the slate indicated. Of late the writing on the slate was a miserable scrawl. The police solved the mystery of Sharp's bad writing, when they saw that the slate was renewed by the same man who had robbed and nearly killed Felix.

Mr. Legis asked permission to interview the young villain in his cell. The permission was granted. He said to the fellow: "Now whilst I am not your lawyer, I would nevertheless like to give you a little advice. You had better plead guilty to this charge; because everybody knows just as well as you do that you are guilty. We know too that the man Sharp hired you to do this villainy. If you will confess that, it may help you in getting a lighter sentence. In fact, if I am here when you are found guilty, I will plead your youth and the fact that those who led you into crime are the more responsible. Think over it well, young man, and act for your own good and for the ends of justice."

The attorney said to Felix, "If I would have offered the villain fifty or a hundred dollars, he would have given the story just as I believe it; but I will never bribe a man to do right."

We have not told our readers of the burglary which had been committed in the home of the Dives the winter preceding these latter events. Without going into detail let us say that it had been carefully planned

and executed. The Dives lost all their silver and other valuables in the dining room, in one night.

About the time of the girls' return from Colorado a discovery was made at the home of the Dives, which threw suspicion on all of the servants of the household, but especially on the cook, and on him who had once been a coachman there. The new coachman in moving some boards in the back yard, behind the stable, came upon a box sunken into the ground. It was covered over with a lid when it was first discovered. It had evidently been used as the receptacle for something. Whatever it was, it had been removed a considerable time before the box was discovered. The dust had accumulated in the box, notwithstanding that the lid fit well upon it, and the box was beneath several boards, which lay in disorder upon it, so that the dust could find its way under the lid. The man reported the matter to the girls, and they told their uncle, wondering what it could mean. He promptly said: "Girls, I know what it means. The person or persons who robbed your house last winter, hid for a time that which they had stolen. When it was convenient for them, they emptied the box. Your silver may have been there until last summer, when you went away. Somebody in this house had a hand in the business. I can hardly suspect Felix of the crime, nor could the women you have about the house have helped in putting your goods there."

The girls looked at each other in amazement. They could not suspect, even for a moment, the blue eyed

Felix, who had now passed into a most honorable position, and who was beyond suspicion in the place he was employed. In fact if they could have been convinced that he was the criminal they would have lost faith in human nature, would in reality have been almost heart-broken. They could hardly think that the cook could be guilty of robbing them of their most valued treasures. They agreed to say nothing about it for the present, to anyone. They cautioned the man who had made the discovery not to say anything to a single soul. They said nothing to Octavia, who still kept her room at the home of the Dives and continued her preparations for her wedding, heedless of what had been told her.

They did tell Felix about the box, who without being told Mr. Dives' verdict, said, "Girls, someone in this house put that box there to hold for a time the silver that was stolen out of your home. I know you do not suspect me," he said turning an inquiring look upon the two ladies. "You would not consider me so base."

"Certainly not, my dear fellow," said the impulsive and outspoken Jennie. She was right. They did not suspect Felix.

CHAPTER XLIV.

SOME HAPPY AND SOME UNHAPPY PEOPLE.

“The irrevocable Hand
That opes the year’s fair gate, doth ope and shut
The portals of our earthly destinies.”—*D. M. Mulock.*

On the 17th day of December, Carrie’s hero arrived in New York. He at once went to the home of the Dives, on Fifth Avenue. The ladies knew what day he would be there. They had invited Felix, Miss Abraham, and Mr. Legis and his wife to dinner at their home that evening. Octavia was also there. She had asked the girls’ permission to be married privately at six o’clock on Christmas morning in their parlor. She did not see the visitor from Colorado until nearly the hour for dinner. Now that the day of her wedding was so near, she was nervous as well as very busy.

When Octavia entered the parlor all of the guests were already there and were chatting pleasantly together. At such times she was both a guest and a member of the family. When she entered that evening, Susie Dives arose and presented her first to Mr. Legis. She said, “Mr. Legis, allow me to introduce to you Miss Newman, whom I think you have met before.” Mr. Legis remembered having met her, and spoke a few words to her. All this time Carrie’s hero

stared. He watched her as she was introduced to Mrs. Legis and Miss Abraham, the other persons in the parlor whom she did not know. When she turned toward the hero to be presented to him, he arose and before Jennie could say anything, he said to Octavia: "Bless my stars; Liza Nieman, my sister." At the same time he grasped her by the hand, and was about to imprint a kiss on her lips; but she did not give him the opportunity. She too stared when first the hero called her his sister. She knew her brother Nicholas Nieman in an instant, (for this is he whom we have known as Carrie's hero). Before Nicholas could kiss her she had concluded to faint and faint she did. Her brother kept her from falling to the floor. He placed her gently upon a sofa, and in a few moments consciousness returned. In fact the keen eyes of Mr. Legis sought those of Messrs. Dives and Felix and he read what he himself believed, that those gentlemen were convinced that Octavia's faint was in reality a feint.

When she returned to consciousness she faintly asked to be taken to her room. Of course her brother assisted her. Let us follow them and hear her brother give an account of himself. He said: "Sister, you see I am not dead. I know too that mother is still living. I was told so not a week ago. I expect to go to see her before I go West again."

Here his sister interrupted him. "I think you have treated mother very mean indeed. If I were she I would not recognize you as my son."

“Octavia, do not forget that you have treated her just as mean, and a great deal worse. Now listen whilst I explain to you the whole matter. The very morning mother came to Freeport I gave up my job on the railroad. I met a man who was very anxious to have a job. He showed me his references from one railroad on which he had been employed, besides those he had received from individuals with whom he had worked. I believed that the Company would give him the job if he would tell them what he had told me. I had nothing to lose. It was my first day after pay, and I wished to go farther west, so I allowed him to take my place. He had on good clothes, so to clinch the bargain and to save me something, we exchanged pantaloons. He said he would ruin his anyway, and I might as well have them. That is the reason they found my name and my waist measure, together with the date on the watch-pocket, of the dead man’s pantaloons. I read the whole account of the man’s death and how my mother was awaiting my arrival in the depot when my supposed dead body was brought to the town instead. The Dubuque papers contained a full account of the whole mystery. I wished very much to go to mother and tell her that I was not dead; but I knew that she would try to persuade me to return home with her. I knew that grand-father’s was no place for me. I would be compelled to be separated from the rest of you anyhow, and she would worry just as much. I thought now that she believed me dead she would be better off than

if she knew I was being kicked around in the world. I thought I would make my fortune, when I would return to her and give her double joy for all her sorrow."

"You did not make it very fast," interrupted his sister.

"It seemed to me a providence that I was relieved of my job on that road. I do not suppose that I would have been killed. I would have been more careful. But it did seem as if I was to miss mother. I believe that I saw her with her veil over her face standing at the window of the depot in Freeport when I went through on the express train. Because I did not see her, my future and hers were changed. I can still make her happy. And I will do my best to prove my love."

"You say, you know that mother is still living. How do you know?"

"Dr. Burns of Colorado Springs gets a letter from my brother Lee now and then. About a week ago he told me he had received one. Lee's wife and little girl died last spring."

"Why, you do know more than I; that is sure. That explains why I did not get an answer to my telegram last winter when I told them I was so sick. Does Lee know that you are still alive?"

"No, I have been fortunate enough to hear from them, without their hearing from me. Dr. Burns has known that I am the brother only a short time. About two years ago I met my cousin in Denver. It

was by mere accident. He saw my name on the hotel register and introduced himself. We had quite a good time together. When we parted we traded knives. The last I heard from him he went to California. He was driving a team I think, up a mountain out there."

Octavia said: "Well, this is stranger than fiction. That explains who Felix is. You know the man who used to be coachman for the Dives before the man they now have? His name is Felix. I believe that he is Felix Nieman, your cousin. Did you not meet him?" "Of course I did. Susie and Jennie knew that he was my cousin, and that you are my sister, ever since the first week Jennie came out to Colorado; but they kept it from you because you used to snub him. They thought they would not let you know until you saw me. His folks in Santa Fe do not know that he is in New York. He wishes to surprise them; but when I was there last summer and about six months before that time, I saw how they worried about him. I did not know then where he was or I would have told them. I almost felt like writing to my mother when I saw how his mother worried. I realized however, that the circumstances are not the same. Mother feels almost certain that I am dead." Nicholas told his sister much of his experience since he left his home at ——— With all that is of interest, the reader is already familiar. Octavia insisted on having Felix called up stairs, that she might see him in private. Nicholas went down and called him.

When Felix Nieman, the coachman of the Dives, came into the room, Octavia arose from her chair, and extended her hand to him at the same time saying, "Why did you not tell me this before? You are a bad boy. We might have had many a pleasant hour together, if you had not been so modest."

Felix said: "I have not been certain of it very long myself."

She continued, "I thought at one time that you might be my brother. The day I saw the knife with the initials, 'N. N.' upon it, I thought you must be my brother; but because you did not recognize me, and my brother was reported dead and buried, I let the matter rest. Do the girls in the house know that you are my cousin?"

"Only since Jennie went to Colorado and got acquainted with Carrie's 'hero,' as Nicholas has been called for more than a year already. He wrote to me, and I at once knew who he was. I was not sure that you and I were related; because you call yourself Newman."

Whilst the Niemans were still talking, unmindful of the flight of time, Susie and Carrie Dives came up stairs arm in arm. Susie said, "Do you people know that we are waiting for you for dinner for the last half hour already? If you do not soon come everything will be spoiled. I know you have much to say, but take your time to it."

Nicholas caught hold of Carrie's arm and drawing her away from Susie he said, "My sister, do you know this young lady?"

"Oh, yes; I know her well and favorably. I met her the first day she came from Colorado."

"Well, she is my heroine," said Nicholas. "She will be my wife, God willing, after six o'clock on New Year's eve."

Of course Octavia kissed her, and called her her "sweet sister." Susie gave Felix an inquiring look. He knew what she meant. He said: "Since it is the time for introductions, I wish to introduce my dear Susie, who expects to make me happy by becoming my wife at the same time that Carrie becomes the wife of cousin Nicholas. But come, we must go to dinner." Then they all went down stairs two by two as they hoped to walk together through life. Octavia brought up the rear alone. We shall see whether there was a prophecy in her act.

Whilst the happy people are at dinner we will tell the reader how all these engagements were brought about. The night Nicholas caught Carrie and led her out, or rather swam out of the sea with her at Pebbly Beach, he found on arriving at those "horrid rocks" that she was unconscious. Nervous and excited as he was, he feared that she might be dead. In the agony of his heart he said, "For God's sake, Carrie speak to me." Just then consciousness returned to her and

she said, "What shall I say to you?" He replied, "Oh, Carrie if we must both die here, tell me that you love me. I want to die knowing that you loved me." She promptly replied, "My dear hero, I love you more than I can tell. You are all to me." He kissed her there with the great ocean behind him and a giant wall of rock in front of him; but it was the happiest moment of his life. She sat down on a jagged edge of the rock. When the water came to her knees he picked her up and carried her to a place of safety. His happiness had given him new strength. When he placed her on the stones of Pebbly Beach she said, "There Darling; that is better."

He spoke no more to her on the subject of his love until they were in their Colorado home, and Jennie was sick. Whilst they were watching by her bed-side they fixed on the day of their marriage.

"How about Dr. Burns," do you ask? Well I will tell you. Carrie never loved him. She esteemed his friendship. One reason she was glad to have him accompany them to California, was that she might show him that her heart belonged to her hero. She was too weak to tell him, the night he asked her to be his wife as she sat by the window in her sick-chamber, that she loved another.

We have seen that Felix spent considerable of his time in the evening in company with Susie and Jennie Dives, during the winter. Just before Susie was

called to Colorado, she sent Felix a note stating that she would be pleased to have him call at the parlor that evening. She would be at home. Of course he availed himself of the opportunity. He had a pleasant chat, and the evening was passing rapidly, but Susie saw that Felix had something on his mind, so she said to him, "Pray what makes you so solemn for the last half hour?"

Felix said, "I must tell you before you go to Colorado, that I shall miss you very much. I have missed you all this summer. I did not know what you were to me until we had parted. The few letters we exchanged were as the crumbs of bread given a famishing man. They made me only the more eager to see you, and tell you that I love you. Will you in the high social position you occupy, stoop to accept the love of a poor man? I will do my best to make you happy, if you will be mine."

Susie replied, "That is a very grave question for me to answer. I must consider others as well as myself. You have been gaining an influence over my affections by your manly conduct, ever since I have known you."

Susie asked for time for consideration. Felix begged of her to make up her mind finally until next morning. He would be at the train. But he did better than that. He went to Mr. Legis next morning, where Susie was stopping, and in the hack which took

them to the Grand Central she told him that she would be his wife.

* Miss Abraham had been trying to persuade herself that she was in love with Felix; but they had a talk together one evening on the subject of marriage, and from that time she was less demonstrative in her conduct. They are still good friends, but nothing more.

The folks at the supper enjoyed themselves very much, because everybody was happy. There was nothing to mar the pleasure of the evening.

The next day was one of expectation for Octavia. It was the day upon which she expected Mr. Sharp. Felix had not told her of his suspicions with regard to Sharp. He had not told even his own Susie; because he knew that they did not have a very good opinion of Sharp in that house as it was. He knew that anything he could say to Octavia would not change her mind with regard to her acceptance of Sharp; but it would make her a sad heart, and he felt sure that there would be sadness enough for her in due time.

But as we have been saying, it was the day on which Sharp was expected, and Octavia was anxiously awaiting his coming. It was already towards evening. The mail man handed Octavia a letter which had first been sent to the hospital on the Island. It had lain there some time, for it was marked Omaha, Dec. 3rd. Octavia tore it open in haste because she saw that the

address was not in Mr. Sharp's hand. She feared he might be sick. Imagine her feelings when she read:

“Omaha, 12: 3, '9—.

Miss. Octavia Newman, M. D.,

Dear Madam:

Mr. Sharp, your agent, received purchase money \$25,000 to-day. The bank informs me that he deposited it and received a draft payable to himself at San Francisco. It seems strange to us that he did not get a draft on New York payable to you. If all is not right telegraph.

John Baer.”

Octavia called Susie to the room and with a trembling hand gave her the letter, making no comment. Susie read it. When she had finished, she exclaimed, “The thief.” Then without saying a word she ran down stairs, and called Jennie. She told her to go to Octavia instantly. Next she rang the bell for the coachman. She told him to bring the carriage as quickly as possible. She would be at the front door and accompany him down town. When she met him at the stepping stone, she told him to drive to the Western Union at once. They soon reached their destination.

When they got to the office Susie sent the following dispatches:

“Mr. Baer, Omaha.

Sharp is a thief. Stop payment of draft, if not too late.

Miss Newman.”

“Clearance House, San Francisco,

Do not cash draft on bank at Omaha payable to William Sharp. He is an embezzler. Can prove assertion.

Miss Octavia Newman.”

The next day Miss Octavia Newman received a dispatch from San Francisco, stating that the draft had been cashed more than a week ago, and that Mr. Ketchum who had identified Sharp was since interviewed, and had informed them that Sharp had taken passage to Japan.

Of course Octavia was heart-broken. She was sick in bed and prayed to die. Jennie Dives told her she should not be so foolish. She had gotten rid of Sharp. That fact was worth \$25,000. It was of course hard to think that she had lost all the money from the True estate, except \$8,300; but that was a thousand times better than to lose herself, soul and body, in the clutches of that bad, bad man.

Christmas came and went; but Octavia Newman spent it in bed. It was the saddest day of her life. The grief and chagrin of the poor girl can better be imagined than described. When the clock struck six that evening, she arose from her bed and dressed herself. Then she went to the trunk and got out her wedding dress. Then she tottered to the bath room, and holding the garment with one hand, she lit a match and held it to the dress, and watched it as it was slowly consumed. When it was consumed she said, “There girls; those ashes show the condition

of my hopes for this life. I have made up my mind that I will not die. I am going to Jerusalem, to the position offered me some months ago. I will tell my friends there that I am weary of life, and that I am come to spend its few remaining days among those who are already as good as dead. I blame myself for all my misery. If I had taken the advice of my friends, I would not be thus broken-hearted on the day that brings others the richest blessings of their lives." Susie told her that the very day itself whispered to her heart the glad tidings that there was a better life where such sorrow as was hers now, could never enter.

On New Year's eve the double wedding occurred in the parlor of the Dives. In addition to those whom we met at the dinner when Octavia received her brother Nicholas, there were present Lee Nieman, M. D., and his mother. We will not try to describe either the costumes or the ceremony. It is needless to say that everybody was happy.

Before Christmas already, Felix and Nicholas Nieman went to —, Pa. They stopped at the hotel in the village, and then Felix went to the Nieman home and introduced himself as the cousin from Santa Fe, N. M.

Lee then spoke of the hope that still lingered in the heart of his mother that her son Nick might yet be alive. Felix asked him how he thought his mother would feel if Nicholas were to come home. Thus gradually he prepared the way until he finally told Lee that Nicholas was even then at the hotel in the village.

The mother was told by Lee that her son was still alive, and when Felix had told her why he had not made known the fact that he was not killed, he asked her whether she would forgive him. She told him the joy she would experience at seeing him would cause her to forget all her sorrow. Then they told her that her son was even now at the village hotel.

When a few moments after that her head lay on the bosom of her son, she said, "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Octavia asked Felix the next day about the cook's watch. He told her that he knew nothing about it; but it would be an easy matter for him to inquire. When he returned from the office that evening, he went to the cook's room. He found that worthy in his den. He told him about the telegram received that day from Omaha, and that they thought that would be the last of Sharp. The cook said that he knew Sharp to be a bad man, and that he would not be surprised to hear that he had committed any crime. Nothing was too bad for such a man. Felix then told the cook that they had strong suspicions that Sharp had been implicated in the robbery committed in the home of the Dives. He noticed that the cook changed from his usual ruddy complexion to one deathly pale. He admitted that it might be even so.

Felix felt that he had now prepared the way for his question about the watch. He said, "Do you know that Miss Newman, the nurse, is my cousin?" The cook admitted that it was news to him. Then he

told him a little about Octavia's family history. How her father had been brought home dead, and how his watch was missing. The cook trembled violently as Felix told him this. He told the young man that he was sick. He was subject to such spells of late. The doctor had told him only a few weeks ago that he was suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart. Felix asked him whether he could do anything for him; but the cook said he had medicine, and he would soon feel better. Then Felix left him.

The day after the Dives and Niemans were married the cook told Mrs. Susie Nieman that he was too sick to work; in a week or so he hoped to feel better. If she would give him a vacation for that length of time he might be able to return. Just two days afterwards, his body was found outside of the city limits along the track of the N. Y. Central and Hudson River Railroad, horribly mangled. Life had been extinct for some hours already. In his coat pocket was found a letter addressed to the Dives. In it the cook confessed that he had opened the door for the man and the son with whom we have already become acquainted. Sharp had planned the robbery and the two mentioned executed it. The cook said he received nothing for his part of the work. Neither had he put the box in the back yard. The younger of the two robbers had done that. From that box the old lady carried the silver to her room. It was there melted into a brick and sold by Sharp.

He gave as a reason for the part he took in robbing the girls who had always been so kind to him, that Sharp and the man threatened to tell of that which he now would not keep a secret any longer. "Tell Octavia Newman that the father of the young man who is now in jail for robbery and assault with intent to kill, is the man who murdered her father near —. I was with him at the time; but did not assist. I received his watch for keeping the secret. The doctor came driving along the road. We were sitting in a fence corner. It was dark and he did not see us. When nearly opposite us a strap of the harness loosened, and the doctor dismounted to fix it. We were cold, hungry, and without money. My companion picked up a stone and knocked the doctor over at the first blow. Then he took the wrench out of the buggy box and finished him with it. We put the wrench in the sand on the edge of the creek, near the bridge. I am not the murderer. I never killed anybody in my life; but I helped to conceal that and other crimes which that man committed. I have no peace of mind day or night. That is why I now go to my death, in the hope that I may find peace in the next world."

The wrench was afterwards found at the place indicated and confirmed what the cook said. The young robber received a ten years' sentence at hard labor, and the old man was imprisoned for life. The woman was sentenced to a three years' term. If all had been known, she too would have received a longer term.

On the twelfth day of February Octavia sailed for Jerusalem, to take her position as nurse of lepers. Even that is far better than if she would have become the wife of Sharp, the moral leper. The day she embarked she received a telegram from Mr. Ketchem who for some months already resided at San Francisco. It stated that Sharp on his voyage had gambled away most of his fortune stolen from Octavia. Finally he became involved in a dispute over the game, and his disputant drew his revolver and shot him through the heart. Thus closed the career of William Sharp, Esq.

Nicholas Nieman and his bride at this writing have gone back to the stone house in Colorado, and mother Nieman has gone with them. In the spring Lee expects to pay them a visit. Mother Nieman says she has another daughter now in place of the dear girl who went with her baby to heaven. She finds in Carrie Nieman not a little comfort and solace because of her bereavement in the death of Lee's wife. The Fact that Octavia has gone to Jerusalem does not worry her. She says, "Octavia always preferred to dwell apart from the rest." Felix is to be a partner in the store of Abraham. He will reside with his wife on Fifth Avenue.

The friendship between Jennie Dives and Dr. Burns continues, and who knows what may be the outcome?





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

41584

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 001 247 384 9

